

Reds rise to Ferguson's challenge

David Hopps

ALEX FERGUSON had unmistakably thrown down the challenge last Sunday, warning that he would be "examining in every detail the attitudes and standards" of a Manchester United side whose Premiership challenge has been undermined too often by the rival attractions of the Champions League.

Even such notably hard taskmasters can purr with delight on occasions, and Ferguson was delighted by this response. There is no more passionate challenge to United than that provided by their rivals from across the Pennines. They had to stretch every sinew, burst every lung before victory was achieved.

This was Leeds's Nou Camp. Manchester United might have gained plaudits for a thrilling midweek draw in Barcelona, but Leeds sensed the opportunity to cause further embarrassment to a side whose Premiership lapses, according to Ferguson, had been "unacceptable". The manager having drawn the line, his players defended it to the last man; they had to.

Only 12 minutes remained of an enthralling contest when Manchester United summoned the goal that swept them back into second place, Aston Villa's lead now only a point.

Appropriately it fell to Nicky Butt, the sort of fringe senior player at whom Ferguson's words had been directed, his first goal of the season coming as he swivelled just inside the area to beat Paul Robinson with a rasping drive. "He has had a



Manchester United's Dwight Yorke congratulates goalscorer Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

PHOTO: NEAL SIMPSON

mixed season but today he was our best player," Ferguson said. "It was a fantastic result for us, and the most entertaining game I've ever known against Leeds at Old Trafford."

Leeds, finally, were spent, but their first away defeat in the Premiership this season brought upon

them considerable credit, as they were disturbed defensively by injuries to Martin Hiden, who may be absent for a month with knee ligament trouble, and to their goalkeeper Nigel Martyn.

Butt had looked in disbelief at the best of these saves: with the game

still goalless, Martyn leapt prodigiously to claw his header on to the bar, sustaining a back injury as he fell on to his far post.

In Ferguson's search for "freshness" this was a United side with their wings clipped: no David Beckham, no Jesper Blomqvist, and

Ryan Giggs appearing only as second-half substitute. Leeds' encouragement, tackling viciously in central areas and bridging in numbers, their strikers like Kewell and Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink back to their sharpest.

Leeds survived Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's appeals for a penalty when he fell under Gunnar Hagen's challenge, before Hasselbaink provided them with a half-hour lead. The latter, entirely unrecognised from the crabby, lanky figure of a few weeks ago, drove determinedly from the left and his powerful shot careered into the net off the inside of the near post.

Martyn winced in pain at every drop kick, patted balls at his feet into touch in near despair and saved excellently from Solskjaer and Co. in between swigging down a couple of painkillers hurried round by his manager, David O'Leary. His last duty, though, was to pick the ball from the net, Solskjaer receiving Dwight Yorke's pass to beat him with a low, angled drive.

For Martyn to survive the half-one thing, to emerge for the rest, practically impossible. He gave way to his teenage understudy, Robinson, who through no fault of his own was beaten within 10 seconds of the restart. Roy Keane side-stepping into the roof of the net after Paul Scholes had sped outside Ian Harte.

That Leeds could summon another response in the face of such mounting casualties seemed unlikely, but within six minutes they were level.

Kewell, full of vim throughout, capitalised upon an error by Brown and his left-foot finish over Schmeichel was delightfully composed. Robinson's saves then kept Leeds alive until the moment that brought Butt's season alive.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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The Guardian Weekly

The Washington Post, The New York Times

Israel faces meltdown over peace deal

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

ISRAEL'S prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, won a two-week reprieve from a crucial parliamentary confidence vote after frantic negotiations on Monday that increased the prospect of a change in the government.

Fighting to stay in office just days before President Clinton arrives to try to revitalise the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, Mr Netanyahu was told that he must decide either to form a national unity government or to call early general elections.

The power-broker behind this deal, conducted during hours of filibustering in the Knesset by Netanyahu allies, was Aryeh Deri, leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas party — Israel's fastest-growing political movement.

As the domestic political scene approached meltdown, violence erupted for the fourth day in the West Bank. A Palestinian student related to Yasser Arafat's chief negotiator in the peace process, Sabir Erekat, was shot and declared clinically dead in hospital, while a Jewish settler was shot and injured near the largely Arab city of Jenin.

The violence and the fraught political situation are casting an ugly shadow over President Clinton's planned three-day visit this weekend. The visit was meant to reinforce the international community's determination to see Israel and the Palestinians implement the land-for-peace deal reached in October at the Wye plantation in Maryland.

But a hunger strike by 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in protest at Israel's failure to free Arab political prisoners has made the tense atmosphere worse, with Israelis and Palestinians trading ever more incendiary threats.

Nasser Erekat, a 22-year-old student at the West Bank's Bir Zeit university, was pronounced clinically dead at al-Makassed hospital in East Jerusalem on Monday night.



Palestinian youths fire catapults at Israeli soldiers during clashes in Bethlehem

PHOTOGRAPH: SANTIAGO LYON

He had been shot in the head during a demonstration in Abu Dis, southern Jerusalem. Another protester was hit in the hip.

In the northern West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian police shot and wounded 11 Arabs in a crowd that tried to storm their headquarters. The protesters had set fire to two police cars and a bus after being beaten back from the Israeli enclave of Joseph's Tomb during a rally in support of prisoners.

Israel's political turmoil, created by the gaping divisions in Mr Netanyahu's coalition over the Wye deal

— which is supposed to return a further 13 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians in return for a crackdown on Islamic extremists — has put into doubt the schedule of Mr Clinton's visit, due to begin on Saturday.

Mr Netanyahu's woes deepened after he failed to strengthen his government by enticing a former foreign minister, David Levy, back into the cabinet and bolstering his meagre Knesset majority of 61-59. But Mr Levy turned him down, and the opposition Labour party — which removed its "safety net" after

Mr Netanyahu announced last week that he was suspending implementation of the Wye agreement because of alleged Palestinian misdemeanours — was confident it had enough votes to defeat the government. After Monday night's deal, which sets back the confidence vote by 14 days, Mr Deri said: "Over the next two weeks they [Mr Netanyahu and the Labour leader, Ehud Barak] should decide whether to get together to form a national unity government or call elections."

Washington Post, page 16

Door opens for first steps in human cloning

Sarah Boseley

A REPORT this week that will allow British scientists to take the first steps down the road of human cloning is likely to draw widespread protest.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and the Human Genetics Advisory Commission (HGAC) have been consulting on the ethics of cloning since January.

On Tuesday they published their conclusions, firmly opposing the cloning of a human child in place of the normal means of reproduction, but leaving the door open for cloning human material for therapeutic purposes.

Scientists and ethicists have been pondering the possibilities

with increased urgency ever since Dolly, the cloned sheep, was created nearly two years ago.

The HFEA/HGAC wants to anticipate what may be possible in 10 years' time so that the debate will precede the technology. The report proposes leaving the door open, but insists that scientists will have many hurdles to cross if they seek permission to experiment in this area.

It expects to be asked to permit the cloning of an embryo of perhaps eight to 10 days' growth. The procedure would be to remove a cell from the skin of a human being and fuse its nucleus into a human egg from which the nucleus has been removed. The embryo would develop in a test tube to the

point where a line of stem cells — the basic cells which have the potential to become any part of the human body, whether brain, kidney or leg — have developed. The material could then be frozen and stored for later use.

Medical opinion is in favour of proceeding with cloning in the hope of helping the sufferers of diseases such as Parkinson's. Sir Colin Campbell, chairman of the HGAC, said: "We believe it would not be right at this stage to rule out limited research using such techniques, which could be of great benefit to seriously ill people."

The greatest advantage to cloned material is that it will not be rejected by the body from which the original cell was

taken. Some scientists in the forefront of the field talk of the potential for developing "spare body parts" — the possibility of cells being removed from babies at birth, to be cloned, developed into stem cells, and then stored against the day when needed for a replacement organ, such as a kidney or a heart.

The anti-cloning lobby is appalled that the HFEA will not stop further experimentation. Patrick Dixon, a leading anti-cloning campaigner, said the HFEA's report would be "a Christmas present for cloners around the world".

"Human clones will be created in British labs," he predicted, and would-be cloners of new human beings, such as Richard Seed in the United States, would be able to profit from the research.

Impeachment hangs over Clinton's head

Martin Kettle in Washington

BILL CLINTON is facing an increasingly uphill battle to avoid impeachment after a key Republican leader dug in against allowing a vote of censure against the president in the House of Representatives.

Congressman Tom DeLay of Texas, the whip for the Republican majority in the 435-member House, said this week that a censure vote would be "a terrible precedent" and should be kept off the agenda when the House votes on impeachment.

Mr DeLay's move came days before the House judiciary committee is expected to draft at least one article of impeachment against Mr Clinton, based on the Monica Lewinsky affair, in an increasingly uncompromising political atmosphere in Washington.

The censure compromise is under assault after Mr Clinton, in answers to 81 questions from the committee last week, angered Republicans and dismayed a few Democrats by refusing to retreat from his long-standing denial of lawbreaking in his relations with the former White House intern.

That leaves the increasing probability that the issue will come down to a straight congressional showdown on impeachment in the coming week, with only a handful of votes deciding the majority either way.

Mr DeLay wants to tighten the screws on the group of Republican waverers who favour censure, including a fine levied on Mr Clinton. The Republicans have a 228-207 majority in the outgoing House, which means that 11 Republicans would need to vote with all the Democrats and the lone independent to prevent Mr Clinton facing the ignominy of a Senate trial.

Washington Post, page 16

Moderates take stand in Iran

Taiwan avoids China showdown

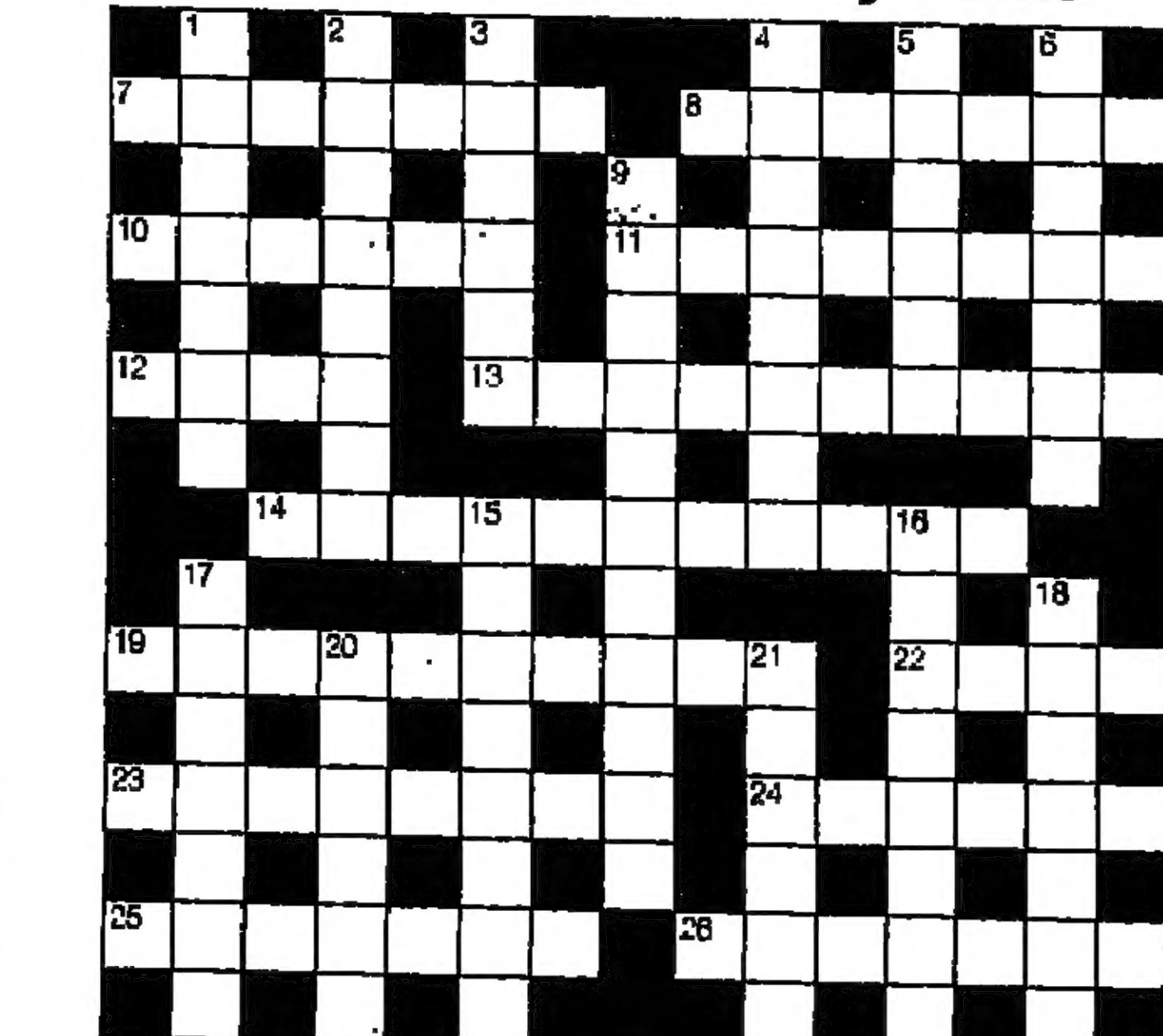
Holocaust focuses American thoughts

Human rights: 50 years of progress

Why does Europe so hate Turkey?

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4.50	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 500	Sweden	SK 19
Hungary	HUF 500	Switzerland	SF 8.80
Italy	L 3.500		

Cryptic crossword by Rufus



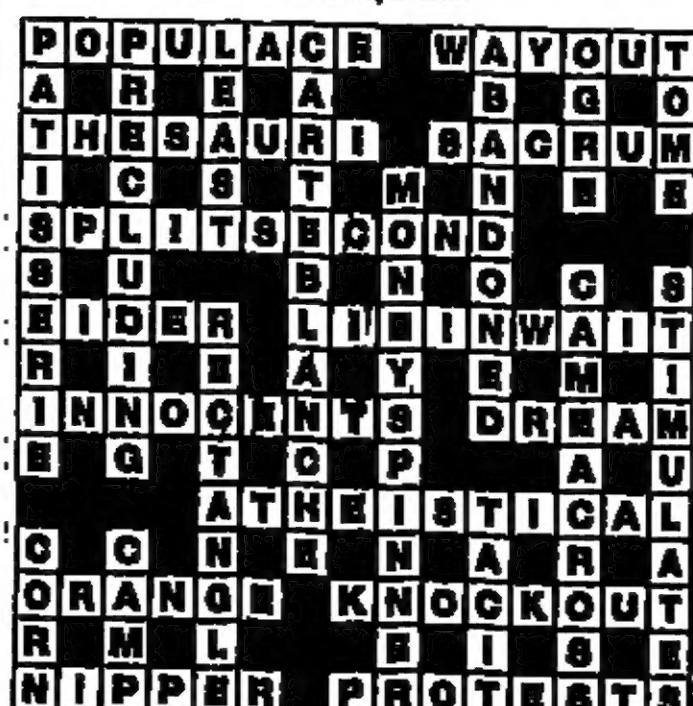
Across

- 7 Shout out various numbers during course of test (7)
8 As result of special deal, English railway passed through another station (7)
10 Key operators may strike against it (6)
11 Lois died broke but greatly admired (8)
12 Time that is right for a row (4)
13 Spot cash the bookmakers must be prepared to pay out (5,5)
14 Intrigued at form of non-appreciation (11)

Down

- 19 It may provide accompaniment to "Pinafore" production (10)
22 Undreamt of money (4)
23 Dude pairs prepare to ride on the ranch (6,2)
24 Cats in the pound (6)
25 La Costa resort by the sea (7)
26 Left Spain for somewhere in Africa (7)

Last week's solution



Tennis ATP Tour Championship

Corretja fights to the finish

Stephen Brierley in Hanover

THIS all-Spanish ATP Tour Championship final between Alex Corretja and Carlos Moya, a re-run of this year's French Open, was an extraordinary contest. Moya had more than half won the match before Corretja staged a remarkable comeback and went on to win 3-6, 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, 7-5.

Moya's dashing good looks, shoulder-length hair, baggy clothing and huge paddle feet are more than enough to single him out on any court, yet it is the quality of his shots, notably a searing forehand, the intensity of his serve and his athleticism which suggested that here was a Spaniard for all seasons and surfaces.

His straight-sets victory over Corretja at Roland Garros had been a largely bloodless affair, the two men embracing each other and talking of their undying friendship. This time, having beaten Britain's Tim Henman in the semi-final, Moya warned: "I will have no friend. I'm going to fight to the death."

Perhaps he should have kept his mouth shut, for it was Corretja, the shock semi-final winner over the world's No 1, Sampras, who fought to the death, dropping to his knees at the close. Moya sank on his

chair and tried to comprehend the incomprehensible. It was a defeat that for months to come will sorely trouble the 22-year-old Spaniard, the youngest in the eight-man field.

Unlike Moya, Corretja is not a charismatic figure, but like the former he has taught himself to play on hard courts and indoors by sheer application.

The victory here made him the first player to win the event, formerly the Masters, at the first attempt since John McEnroe 20 years ago. That Corretja saved three match points against Sampras should have warned Moya of his impending fate. "Alex is hitting the ball real heavy," said Sampras. For Moya the blows were sledgehammers.

Corretja ends the year as the world's No 3, behind Sampras and Chile's Marcelo Rios, with Moya at No 5.

Henman meanwhile finishes the season at No 7, his highest yet, with Greg Rusedzki at No 8. Both left here considerably richer, Henman by \$315,000 and Rusedzki by \$272,000.

Both Britons will face the new year with considerable confidence, the Wimbledon title being their prime objective. But what would they — and particularly Henman — give now for a quarter-share of Corretja's staying power.

John Co 136

Blair in the grip of island mentality

EUROPE THIS WEEK
Martin Walker

DESPITE a minor political hiccup in an offshore island, the cause of European integration took two giant steps forward last week. The central banks of 10 of the countries to join the new single currency on January 1 all cut their interest rates to 3 per cent. The 11th, Italy, cut its rates to 3.5 per cent.

It was indeed a "somewhat sensational" move as the head of the European central bank, Wim Duisenberg, described it. It was also a striking display of the strategic co-ordination and convergence of economic policy that the euro was always intended to bring.

It followed another important development in what is now a galloping process of euro-driven integration. If everyone is using the same money and the same interest rates, then other aspects of economic policy are also under intense pressure to converge all across Europe, from wage settlements to pricing policies to tax rates.

So France and Germany, at one of their regular bilateral summits in Potsdam last week, jointly suggested not only accelerating progress towards tax harmonisation, but also ensuring that laggards among the 15 members of the European Union do not hold others back. It was time, the joint Franco-German declaration said, to start moving towards a system of majority voting for tax policies. Individual national vetoes would have to go.

Since the national veto is enshrined in the Maastricht and Amsterdam treaties, this will require a new treaty, which in turn requires a new Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) to prepare it. The Germans, who assume the presidency

of the EU's Council of Ministers in January, say that if they can get their other business of agricultural and budget reform out of the way in time, they hope to start the next IGC at the EU summit in Cologne in June. The Finns, who take over from the Germans in July, in turn also want to use their six-month presidency to advance the cause of ending national vetoes.

All of this created uproar in Britain. Tony Blair's moment of truth with Europe has arrived with this threat to outflank London's veto. The renewed isolation in Europe that the British government dreads is looming again.

The joint declaration from the German and French governments was a charter for integrated economic, income, welfare, and employment policies across the EU, or at least within the euro-zone. It said: "We will campaign for stronger co-ordination in economic policy, particularly in the framework of the 11 euro-countries, for rapid progress in harmonisation of taxes, and for the formation of a real European social model."

President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France, and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany stressed that the Franco-German relationship "is more important than ever as the engine of Europe's construction". The new Franco-German accord, and their firm agreement on tax harmonisation, undermined British hopes of using the political relationship with the new German Social Democratic government to become a third partner in the traditional Franco-German alliance.

The immediate reaction from the British minister in charge of finance, Chancellor Gordon Brown, who has repeatedly threatened to use the British veto against EU tax plans, was firmly negative. "That



Head to head... Jospin, Chirac and Schröder in Potsdam last week

would require a change in the European treaty, and that is not going to happen," he stated.

But at the same time Britain approved a proposal from the European Commission that would make Oskar Lafontaine, Brown's German counterpart, the prime spokesman for the new single currency at Group of Seven meetings for the whole of next year. He will speak for the euro during the presidency of both Germany and Finland, which is not a member of the G7. France takes over the presidency at the beginning of 2000.

The power of Lafontaine and the perceived threat to British sovereignty over taxes, galvanised the British Eurosceptic press to new heights of xenophobia. "Foxrot Oskar" blared the front page of the Sun, with the "F" and the "O" picked out in red. The coarseness of the insult and the vulgarity of the wit had to be explained to baffled Euro-

peans, even after Blair had condemned Rupert Murdoch's Sun for its tone.

Not only is the honeymoon between the Murdoch press and Blair clearly over, but in Lafontaine they have identified a new hate figure. And while they monstrously exaggerated the EU threat to British institutions, suggesting falsely that both Britain's trial-by-jury system and its zero-rating of value added tax on food and children's clothes would have to go, they are broadly right to say that the coming of the euro will take the process of integration to a new and far more intense phase.

All of this British panic tended to obscure the striking flaw that emerged in the Franco-German summit. There was a serious clash over reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), where Chirac said "compromise will still be needed" in a wide-reaching negotiation at which Britain's celebrated

budget rebate would also be on the table.

The French and Germans were also divided on policies over nuclear energy, the role of nuclear weapons within the Nato alliance, and crucially on Schröder's plans to reform the EU budget over the next few months. Without a deal on the CAP, such reform will prove elusive and Britain and Germany agreed on the need for a spending freeze on the EU budget.

In short, Britain has much to offer in the usual give-and-take of Euro-bargaining. But the Murdoch press on the one hand, and the reality of euro-driven integration on the other, give Mr Blair little room for manoeuvre.

He has been given a grim warning of the kind of propaganda barrage he will face when he calls the referendum and appeals to the public to agree to give up the pound in favour of the euro, and all the flows from it.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Rights for all still remain a dream

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 50 this week. Ian Black assesses what changes it has brought

IT WAS well after midnight in the elegantly curved Palais de Chaillot in Paris, opposite the Eiffel Tower, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was presented to the United Nations General Assembly half a century ago this week.

"A long job finished," commented a satisfied Eleanor Roosevelt, chairwoman of the UN Human Rights Commission and widow of the United States president who had led the penultimate stage of the bloody triumph over fascism.

December 10, 1948 marked an event of huge importance: three years after a world war of unparalleled savagery, the fledgling UN gave eloquent expression to the very loftiest of human aspirations.

Trumpeting hope over experience, the language echoed the American Declaration of Independence to affirm that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood".

No matter that support for these ringing sentiments was far from unanimous: Saudi Arabia abstained; South Africa, with its new system of apartheid, objected. So did the Soviet Union, demanding the primacy of national sovereignty and the collective over the individual rights it saw as the embodiment of bourgeois liberalism.

It was a moment of heady idealism in unpromising circumstances: as Mrs Roosevelt expressed the hope that the declaration would be a "Magna Carta of all mankind", the world was digging the first trenches of the cold war.

As this week's anniversary celebrations are held in the same curving, modernist edifice on the right bank of the Seine in Paris, the late of Chile's former dictator, Augusto Pinochet, stands as a

Troubled world

UK

Arbitrary detention of asylum seekers in Wakefield. At any one time 700-800 asylum seekers are detained in prisons and detention centres before the merits of their claims have been assessed.

US

On December 10, the US is set to complete its 600th execution since 1977. Among those killed for the date at least 30 were mentally retarded and 12 were killed in crimes committed when they were under 18. The US executes an average of one prisoner per week.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Colombia

Death squad-style killings of children regarded as "disposable", such as "vagrants" and drug dealers, are common. In 1997, more than 40,000 people and 40,000 cattle were killed.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Algeria

Since 1992, at least 80,000 civilians have been killed by Islamic extremist groups or security forces and state-backed militias. The victims were at times decapitated, mutilated or burned alive.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Congo Democratic Republic

Incitement to ethnic hatred is practised both by government troops and armed civilian militias. During 1997 militia members routinely killed members of opposing ethnic groups.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Afghanistan

Thousands are routinely detained or subjected to amputations for alleged un-Islamic behaviour including theft, trimming of facial hair or wearing nail varnish. Ethnic executions are common.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

China

Tibetan nationalists and religious activists are systematically held and tortured in the name of "political education". In 1997, 230,000 Chinese were detained without charge or trial in the "re-education through labour" centres for minor crimes including swindling and prostitution.

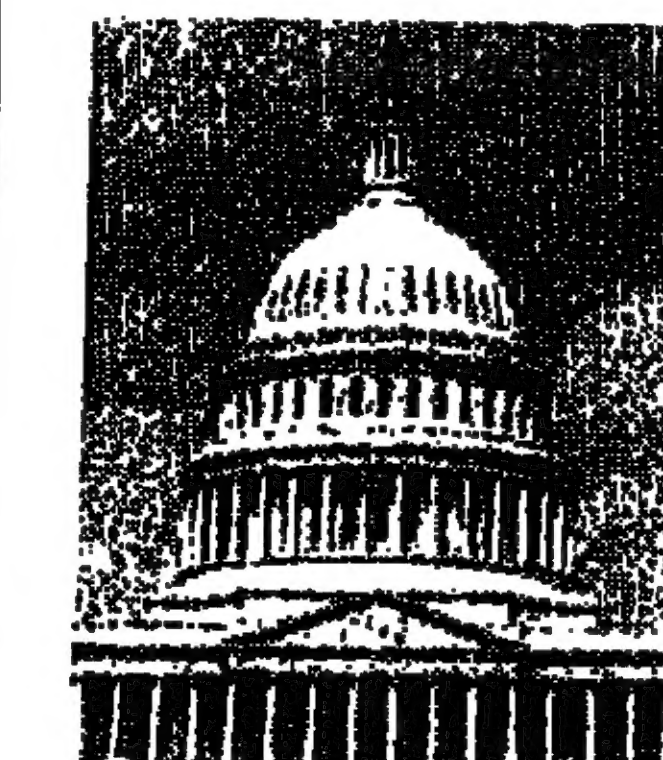
Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Kosovo

Several hundred civilians have been killed in 1998, victims of rape, torture and summary execution by both Serbian forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army. At least 300,000 ethnic Albanians have been displaced from Kosovo.

Source: Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch

Snagged on the barbed wire of history



Washington diary
Martin Kettle

LATE 1990s Washington has been dominated by people who are in turn haunted by their difficult private pasts. Since 1992 the president in the White House has been a man who never knew his father and who carries the name of his stepfather, Roger Clinton. For the past four years, the House Speaker has been a man whose parents' marriage lasted three days and who was later adopted by his own stepfather, Bob Gingrich.

Meanwhile the Czech-born woman who is now the US

Secretary of State discovered only last year that two of her grandparents died in the Nazi holding camp at Theresienstadt, while a third, her grandmother Olga Korbel, was murdered at Auschwitz.

By all accounts Madeleine Korbel Albright has taken time to adjust to the revelations about her Jewish origins and her family history that were first published in the Washington Post nearly two years ago. Until last week she had said little about it in public, preferring to come to terms with her past in private and in her own time. So when Albright chose to break her silence on the matter on December 1, her remarks were of obvious interest.

She wanted to speak, she said, about "a subject for which I have not yet found — and may never find — exactly the right words". The subject was "my grandparents, whom I learned recently were Jewish and died along with aunts, uncles and cousins in the Holocaust". As a girl, she "didn't often think about grandparents. I just knew I didn't have any".

The event that prompted Albright to speak so personally about such intense questions was a conference in Washington last week. Hosted by Albright's own state department,

the conference brought together 44 nations and more than a dozen non-governmental organisations to discuss further international action on "Holocaust-era assets", in other words the restitution and appropriate moral accounting for the possessions that were seized from European Jews between 1933 and 1945 and which have since been dispersed or retained in many parts of the world.

With a few exceptions — all of which are significant and many of which are emotive — the issues debated in Washington were marked by a moral agreement of the kind that marks the post-cold war world. The most conspicuous and important example of this convergence was Russia's unexpected announcement that it, too, would co-operate in the drawing up of an international database of looted art, and that it would return works to families who could provide proof of ownership. Given the sheer size of the holdings in Russia and other parts of the former Soviet Union, this pledge, if fulfilled, deals with more than half of the stolen stockpile.

There are legitimate questions to be raised and a proper debate to be held about whether, at this distance

of time from the Holocaust, the international focus on gold, artworks, property and money as a form of restitution is really quite as virtuous as it may appear. It is not necessarily self-evident that lawyers taking contingency fees on class action suits across Europe over property claims more than half a century old is a morally unquestionable way of accounting for the murder of millions.

Nevertheless one of the most significant commitments made by country after country at the Washington conference was to openness — or, as it is fashionably called these days, transparency.

Albright went on to say: "Because the sands of time have obscured so much, we must dig to find the truth. This means that researchers must have access to old archives; and by that I do not mean partial, sporadic or eventual access; I mean access, in full, everywhere, now."

These are powerful, even noble, words. But they represent what might be called the Kenneth Starr view of historical accounting. In the real world of living politicians, things are never quite so simple.

Later on the same day that Albright had made her moving plea for openness, her spokesman James Rubin appeared at the state department to talk about US relations with Chile. He explained that Washing-

ton is "conducting a review of documents in its possession that may shed light on human rights abuses during the Pinochet era".

Rubin said that Washington would "make public as much information as possible consistent with US laws and the national security and law enforcement interests of the United States". His statement sparked a clutch of stories about the accounting that this would involve. There was talk, inevitably, of the opening of cans of worms.

A day later, Rubin was back at the podium. He had, he feared, been over-enthusiastically interpreted. He had been speaking of "a review of the documents, he stressed, not an *a priori* decision to release them".

He urged the press not to get too excited. "If you go into it assuming that 10,000 documents are going to be released, as some have already speculated, that would be incorrect." And it would all take a very long time.

Pinochet's Chile was not Hitler's Germany. Different times, different customs, of course. But different approaches from the US government, too. If "in full, everywhere, now" is a good disclosure policy now, is there no reason why it should not also apply to one of the Nazis' more effective successors?

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The Week in Britain James Lewis

Robinson faces death by a thousand disclosures

FRESH DOUBTS were raised about the ministerial future of the Paymaster-General, Geoffrey Robinson, when he was called into Downing Street and questioned about his business links with the disgraced newspaper tycoon, the late Robert Maxwell. Although there was no suggestion that No 10 was unhappy with his explanations, the continuing flow of allegations about his past business dealings threaten to undermine his authority.

The millionaire business man was stoutly defended by the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, when it was revealed a year ago that he was the beneficiary of a multi-million-pound trust in the offshore tax haven of Guernsey. Mr Brown also stood by him when he was forced to apologise to the Commons for failing to declare a shareholding in the Register of Members' Interests. It was the second time he had been rebuked for breaching parliamentary rules concerning his outside interests.

The latest revelations concern his former chairmanship of Hollis Industries, an engineering firm linked with Maxwell. In 1991 Hollis sold two subsidiaries to another wing of the Maxwell empire for nearly £3 million. Within hours they were sold again, to yet another Maxwell firm, at a profit of £1.1 million. Six months later, Hollis went into administration. Mr Robinson is facing an investigation by the Department of Trade and Industry over more than a dozen allegations that he broke company law before he became a minister. And there was a fresh claim last week that a firm of which he was once a director owes £500,000 to the Inland Revenue.

Mr Robinson is well liked by his fellow MPs, though many of them wonder why, with his means, he wanted ministerial office anyway. He may well be wondering the same thing himself, and colleagues were speculating this week that he might stand down over the Christmas recess, possibly on health grounds.

PRO-LIFE campaigners and church groups threatened a boycott of the Boots chain of chemists' shops because it opened a family planning clinic at its Glasgow store where young people can get free contraceptives.

The project, a joint venture with Glasgow Health Trust, is aimed at reducing teenage pregnancies and will run "drop-in" clinics for customers, particularly young people, to seek advice and information.

Protesters immediately picketed the Glasgow store and threatened to organise flying picket protests at stores across the UK and Ireland.

After learning that a Roman Catholic newspaper, The Universe, with a readership of 200,000, was planning to run a front-page editorial headlined "Don't shop at Boots", the firm said it was reconsidering whether to keep its clinic open.

A PROTEST against the Government's imposition of a £1,000 tuition fee on university students blew up, to everyone's surprise, at Balliol College, Oxford, where two first-year students, Kate Atkinson and Alice Nash, refused to pay. They were refusing, they said, not

because they could not pay, but because they would not. They were risking their own careers on behalf of coming generations of students too poor to attend university.

The intention to charge fees, announced earlier this year, was routinely condemned by Oxford's junior common rooms, and some freshers have been withholding their payment, but there was little doubt that they would comply in the end.

Miss Atkinson and Miss Nash, both high-fliers with impressive school records, could be suspended from the start of next term. If that happens, Oxford's junior common rooms hint that there may be wider disruption.

The Balliol authorities, fearful that leftwing activism is about to make a comeback, have set up a scheme to help poor students with their fees. They are reluctant to suspend students who cannot pay, but not those who refuse to pay.

CARLTON Communications faced a humiliating climbdown over a faked television documentary, The Connection, which purported to expose drug trade routes into Britain. It may have to hand back eight national and international awards won by the film.

An internal inquiry found nearly 20 important deceptions in the hour-long programme, which was shown in 14 countries. It found two major unproven claims, including the central thesis that there was a new heroin route from Colombia to the streets of Britain. The inquiry conceded that the film, in which three central characters were paid to act roles, should not have been broadcast.

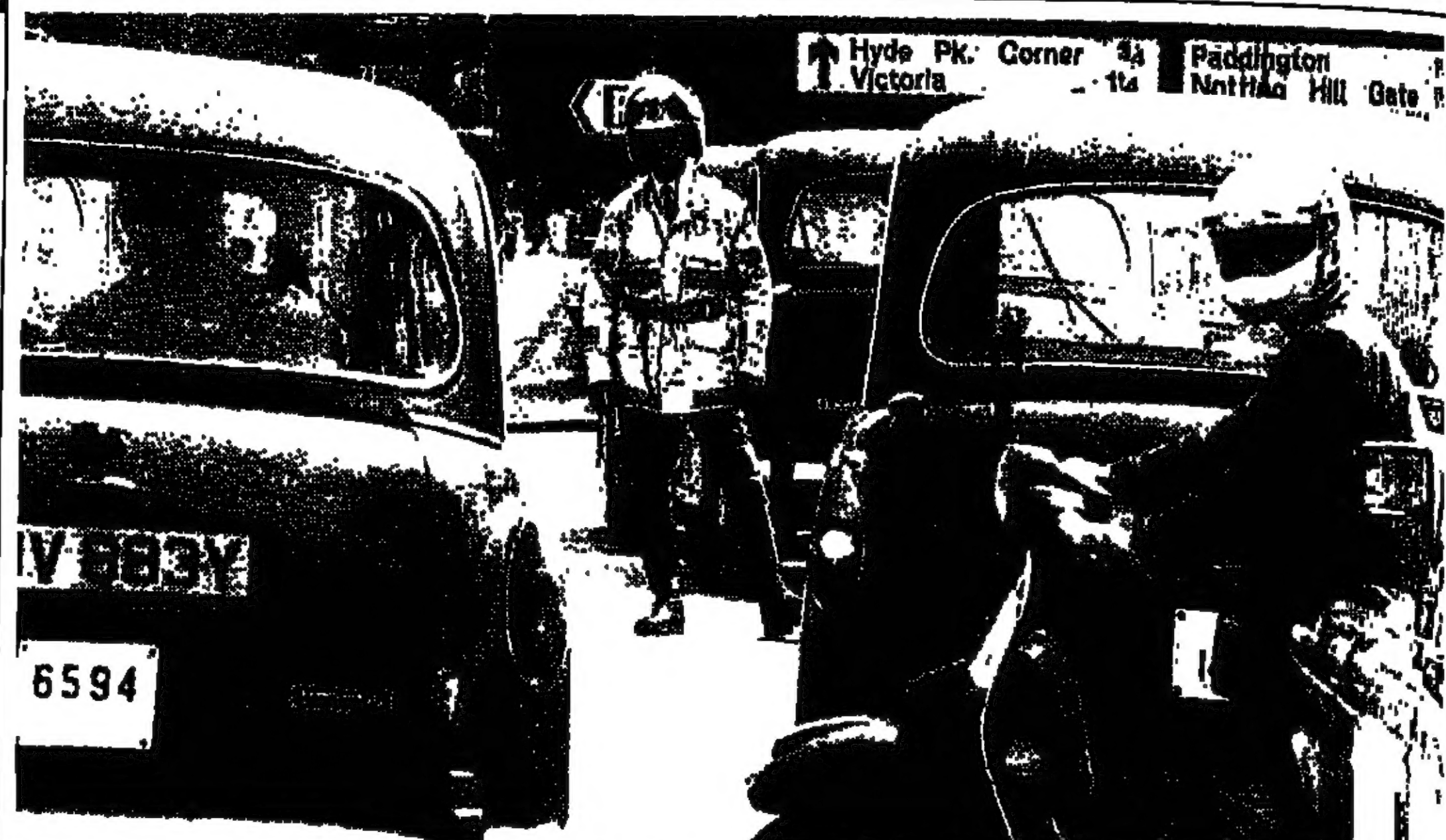
The regulatory Independent Television Commission will meet next week to decide whether to impose a statutory sanction on Carlton. Meanwhile the broadcaster is to establish tough new internal vetting procedures for potentially contentious programmes.

THE GAY rights activist, Peter Tatchell, was fined £18,000 for a "puerile" protest from the pulpit during the Archbishop of Canterbury's Easter sermon. He was convicted under the little-known Ecclesiastical Court Jurisdiction Act of 1860.

The court heard that Tatchell, aged 46, and six other activists from the gay rights group OutRage! climbed into the pulpit during Dr George Carey's sermon at Canterbury Cathedral. Before being removed, he protested about the archbishop's opposition to gay fostering and an equal age of consent.

He was the first person in 31 years to be successfully prosecuted under the act, which forbids "riotous, violent or indecent behaviour in any cathedral church".

The stipendiary magistrate told Tatchell he had "violated the rights of worshippers on one of the most important days in the Christian calendar", though the size of the fine suggested he did not consider it to be a serious offence. A spokesman for Dr Carey said the archbishop had had no role in the prosecution and was "committed to a continuing dialogue with homosexuals".



Grid lock... London's mayor will be given power to charge drivers

PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN HAYES

Traffic will become London mayor's priority

Peter Hetherington

THE DEPUTY Prime Minister, John Prescott, last week promised Londoners the most modern form of city government in Europe, with an elected mayor and a capital-wide council with powers to clamp down on motorists and to revive public transport.

Unveiling the Greater London Authority Bill, Mr Prescott said traffic congestion would be at the heart of the legislation. The bill is likely to be one of the most complex in the new parliamentary session.

As his Department of the Environment and Transport reported that average rush-hour speeds in

the capital had fallen to 12mph, Mr Prescott said the London mayor would be given power to charge motorists on designated routes and levy fees from big employers with company car parks. The revenue would be used to improve underground, rail and bus services.

Centrepiece of the bill will be an agency called Transport for London, under the wing of the mayor and the capital's assembly. It will be responsible for the Underground and buses, and have powers to implement road charging.

But Mr Prescott warned that the Government might have to delay handing over responsibility for the Underground. He admitted that

discussions with private companies — which will have the task of modernising it — might not be complete by mid-2000, when the mayor and assembly may well have been elected.

Critics point to potential friction between the mayor and the 25-member assembly. They will share the budget of £3.3 billion covering eight areas including fire services and the police.

The mayor, supported by a small cabinet, will "devise strategies and action plans" while preparing budgets, while the assembly will prove a "check and balance" with powers to amend the budget and scrutinise mayoral decisions.

Legal aid gets shake-up

Clare Dyer

THE most radical shake-up of the English legal system for at least 50 years was outlined by the Lord Chancellor in a White Paper last week.

The Access to Justice Bill will revamp the legal aid scheme to target resources more on ordinary people's legal needs and less on lawyers and the courts.

Through a new Community Legal Service, money saved by tighter controls on the grant of civil legal aid and on lawyers' fees will be diverted to help for the disadvantaged in such areas as debt, welfare benefits, housing and children's cases, provided through both lawyers and advice centres.

The Government aims to get better value for taxpayers' money by ensuring, through a contracts system, that only competent lawyers carry out publicly funded

work. The £1.6 billion legal aid budget will come under its control for the first time.

The Lord Chancellor dismissed arguments that the changes would lead to lack of choice. "If I was the man in the street, I would prefer a choice among quality-guaranteed lawyers rather than go to a lawyer who might not have the skills and experience for the case in hand."

For the 1 per cent of high-cost criminal cases which eat up more 42 per cent of the crown courts' legal aid budget, individual case contracts will be struck with lawyers. Some QCs have received £400,000 or more from legal aid in a single year.

The bill will abolish the Legal Aid Board and set up a new Legal Services Commission in two parts: a Community Legal Service and a Criminal Defence Service.

The Community Legal Service will co-ordinate Citizens' Advice

Bureaux, law centres and other advice sources, with the more specialised services provided by lawyers so legal help can be better targeted on those in real need, and negotiate contracts with lawyers and others.

The Community Legal Service Fund will replace civil legal aid; money spent on this and the voluntary agencies will be treated as a whole. As legal costs come under control, the aim is to divert funds to more basic advice and help services for the poor and disadvantaged.

A "funding assessment" will replace the current merits test for deciding who qualifies for civil legal aid. No-win, no-fee agreements will be extended to cover divorce disputes over property.

The current means test will be abolished, but judges will be able to order a convicted defendant with assets to pay some or all of the defence costs at the end of the case.

Mandelson's team win gobbledygook award

PETER Mandelson has won the Plain English Campaign's Golden Bull Award for gobbledygook, for his department's minimum wage draft regulations, which include the memorably-named category of "hours of non-hours work worked by a worker", writes *Sue Morris*.

Robert Kilroy-Silk, the TV presenter and former Labour MP, will present the annual awards made by the campaign — a self-appointed public guardian

against bureaucratic gibberish and incomprehensible official jargon — in London this week.

A spokesman for the Trade and Industry Secretary said that Mr Mandelson would be unable to attend, but had ordered the re-drafting of the prize-winning passage as a result of the Plain English Campaign's dubious accolade.

In a reply to Christie Maher, the campaign's director and founder, Mr Mandelson said her

letter announcing his prize had arrived at an "opportune moment" and "inspired the drafters to re-think the offending words".

"Hours of non-hours work" in National Minimum Wage Regulation 16 — which was supposed to cover people such as youth hostel wardens, who have to be available when there is no specific work to do — will now read "hours of unmeasured work". The £3.60 standard minimum wage rate becomes law in April.

Tories in turmoil after Lords deal fails

Michael White
and Ewen MacAskill

THE Conservative party was riven by an historic split last week when William Hague was forced to sack Lord Cranborne, his leader in the House of Lords, after an unauthorised backstairs deal with Labour over abolition of hereditary voting rights that went spectacularly wrong.

Mr Hague revealed the plan — which would have allowed nearly 100 of the 759 hereditary peers to stay on until a fully reformed upper house was established — in dramatic exchanges at Prime Minister's Question Time in the Commons. Only a handful of key players on either side had known about the scheme designed to avoid a fight with the Lords this winter that might have wrecked the Cabinet's legislative programme.

The Conservative leader then faced a revolt by Tory peers, who backed Lord Cranborne's compromise by 80 votes to 20 despite Mr Hague's plea for a principled stand over Lords reform. At an emergency shadow cabinet meeting, he promptly sacked Lord Cranborne for what the peer admitted had been "going behind his back" to Downing Street for three weeks of talks.

Mr Hague immediately addressed a meeting of backbench Tory MPs who endorsed his position even more emphatically than astonished peers had rejected it. It confirmed a split which, some MPs predicted, could either finally ruin the Conservative party or set it on the road to modernisation, free from centuries of elitist privilege.

Mr Hague appointed the chief whip, Lord Strathclyde, an hereditary peer, to the vacancy.

Even loyal Tory MPs were dismayed. "It's a catastrophe, the end of the party as we now know it," said one. "(Tony) Blair has played it brilliantly, he's captured our cavalry," conceded another.

In ducking outright war in the Lords ministers hoped to use the time saved to get through extra bills to set up the Food Standards Agency and the Strategic Rail Authority.

The crossbenchers have been



privately seeking a consensus on Lords reform for two years. Led by the former Speaker, Lord Weatherill, they were 10 minutes from unveiling the 91-peer deal to a Westminster press conference when Mr Hague unexpectedly revealed the plan at Question Time.

Taunting Mr Blair about "this huge climbdown" over New Labour's favourite whipping boy, the hereditary peers, Mr Hague said the Tories were "not prepared to acquiesce in that change because we are not prepared to join forces with him on major constitutional change that is based on no comprehensive plan or principle".

Mr Blair, who had expected to announce the deal later that day, recovered quickly. "I thought we had the agreement of the leader of your party in the House of Lords. Indeed, I believe we have the agreement."

At the heart of the row was a compromise thrashed out behind the scenes between Mr Blair, Lord Cranborne, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine, and Baroness Jay, the new Labour Leader of the Lords, that would have smoothed the

passage of the Lords reform bill. Under the deal, the 91 hereditary peers would be elected by their own parties in proportion to their current strength — 42 Tories, 28 crossbenchers, two Labour and three Lib Dems. How long they would last would depend on how long it took Mr Blair's royal commission to produce "stage two" reform, a partly elected upper house. Three years, said Labour; at least five, said Tories.

What is extraordinary is Lord Cranborne's belief that it was good politics. His actions produced the Conservatives' worst single day since the general election disaster. A Tory frontbench peer said: "We stole defeat from the jaws of victory. We should have had Tony Blair on every bulletin trying to explain away the deal on the peers. Instead, we were in the dock." He described Mr Hague as being primarily to blame for screwing up Lord Cranborne's carefully worked deal on Lords reform.

But despite the chaos, Mr Hague's leadership is under no immediate threat because no credible alternative candidate exists who would be acceptable to Tory MPs.

Mr Hague has complex reasons for rejecting a deal, but mainly because he has no lever in the Commons, given the size of the Labour majority. But a more skilful politician than Mr Hague would have handled the deal better.

The poor state of their relations became obvious during the Lords' Commons ping-pong over the European elections bill: Lord Cranborne wanted to settle with the Government but Mr Hague insisted on pushing it to the point that the Government lost its bill.

The credibility of Mr Hague sagged under fresh blows when four peers resigned from his frontbench in protest at Lord Cranborne's sacking. Most prominent was Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, Lord Cranborne's deputy. Lord Bowness, Lord Pilkington and the Earl of Home joined him. Later Baroness Strange, a hereditary Scottish peer, and Baroness Flather announced they were quitting the Tory whip to sit on the crossbenches in protest.

Comment, page 12

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Comment, page 12

Ambassador rebuked

Richard Norton-Taylor

SIR David Gore-Booth, one of the Foreign Office's most controversial diplomats, was severely rebuked last week in a damning report by the parliamentary ombudsman, who described the (unnamed) envoy's conduct over a consular complaint as "wholly deplorable".

In a report which contains unprecedented criticism of Foreign Office officials, the ombudsman, Michael Buckley, described the department's response to the complaint as "disingenuous" and castigated the Foreign Office for refusing to apologise for the ambassador's indefensible action.

The complainant, a British citizen, was obliged to resign from the company he worked for after the ambassador criticised the man's conduct in a letter to his chief executive. The company, which was not identified, was a government contractor.

The employee complained in 1994 about having to pay a fee to the British consul for a letter of introduction to obtain a tourist visa from another country. He described the consular staff as "officious, unhelpful, and rude".

The ambassador subsequently passed the man's letters of complaint to the company's chief executive, without the employee's knowledge.

The FO has agreed to give the former company employee an ex gratia payment of £5,000, but no disciplinary action has been taken against the ambassador. Sir David, now high commissioner to India, was ambassador to Saudi Arabia at the time.

Eton and Oxford-educated, he famously told the Scott arms-to-Iraq inquiry that "of course, half a picture can be accurate". He also memorably described Iranians as people who "do not think logically", and called Indian officials "incompetent bunglers". Sir David is to leave the FO at the end of this year.

Short ignores brief to boost trade with China

Simon Cooper

CLARE Short, the International Development Secretary, last week revealed she had refused to lobby for British companies during her recent trip to China.

Ms Short said her officials had asked her to try to win business for British firms. In an interview on ITV, the minister said: "Within my briefing there was some suggestion that I might raise the odd contract that was around. I didn't bother."

Ms Short went on to say she did not consider it her duty to talk to Chinese government aides about potential business deals. "China and any other country should buy the most bargain-full project that is on offer," she said.

John Redwood, the shadow trade secretary, called on Tony Blair to "discipline Clare Short and tell all ministers that they must help business from Britain when travelling abroad at taxpayers' expense".

A spokeswoman for the Confederation of British Industry said the Prime Minister's visit to China in October had already flown the flag for British firms.

"The CBI sees the role of the Prime Minister and other government ministers as facilitators in building and developing trade between the UK and China. However, it does not look to them to promote individual companies."

Jenny Tonge, the Liberal Democrat spokeswoman for international development, said Ms Short was "quite right" to keep trade and aid separate, but added: "Of course where aid is not involved ministers and MPs of all parties should be ambassadors for British business abroad."

Ms Short also told how she had made attempts to block British arms sales abroad on human rights grounds, in line with her department's new powers to object to such export deals.

John Co. Ltd

Pinochet law lord linked to Amnesty

Jamie Wilson and Nick Hopkins

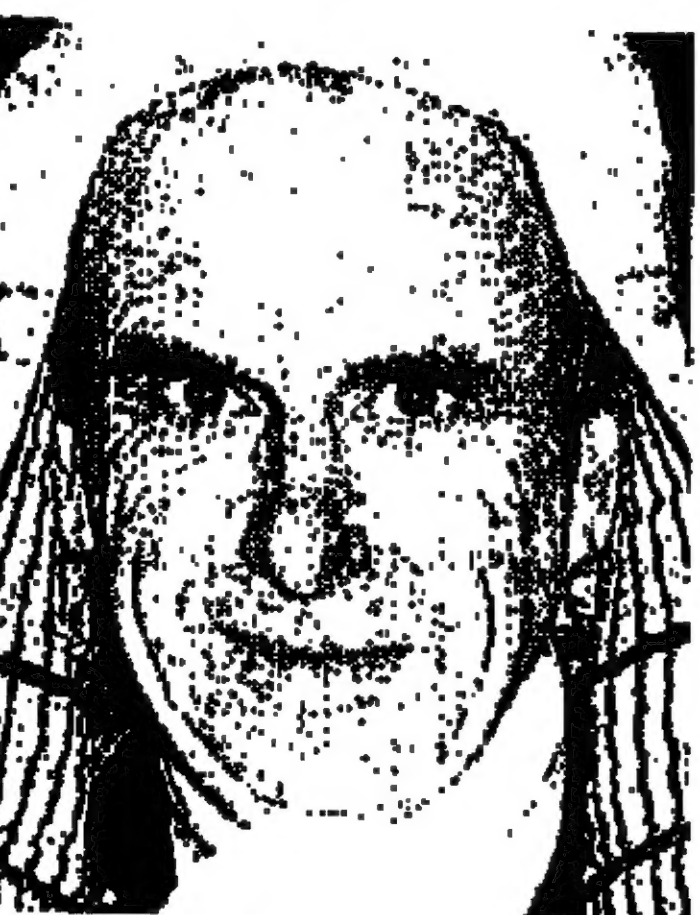
ONE of the law lords who ruled that General Augusto Pinochet should face trial for human rights atrocities is a director of a charity affiliated to Amnesty International, it emerged this week.

Amnesty has admitted that Lord Hoffman — who last week was at the centre of allegations over his wife's links with the human rights organisation — has been an unpaid director of Amnesty International Charity Ltd for seven years.

Although the organisation insisted that Lord Hoffman's work with the charity was entirely unrelated to its campaign to have Gen Pinochet extradited to Spain, the revelations could not have come at a worse time.

The Home Secretary, Jack Straw, must decide by Friday whether to allow the extradition process to start or to send the former Chilean dictator home, and his deliberations are at a delicate stage.

Lord Hoffman's seven-year involvement with the charity was conceded by Amnesty on Monday in a letter to Kingsley Napley, the solicitors acting for Gen Pinochet.



Lord Hoffman: an unpaid Amnesty director for seven years

who had demanded from them details of his links with the organisation.

Amnesty also admitted that in 1997 Lord Hoffman was involved in an Amnesty fund-raising appeal for a new building for the organisation in Britain.

According to Amnesty, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham, who originally ruled in the High Court that Gen Pinochet had immunity from the jurisdiction of the English courts, was also involved in this appeal.

The general's lawyers are already seeking to overthrow the House of Lords' ruling against Gen Pinochet on the grounds that Lord Hoffman's wife, Gillian, is an administrative assistant with the human rights organisation in London. Submissions sent to Mr Straw claim that Lady Hoffman's position puts into question the validity of the law lords' ruling.

Amnesty has been one of the most vocal organisations in the campaign to extradite the former dictator to Spain.

Amnesty International Charity Ltd was set up in 1986 after Amnesty tried and failed to win charitable status for its entire operation.

It was established to pay for research and educational work on human rights issues and is funded by donations from individuals.

Its directors — Lord Hoffman and Peter Duffy QC — and the company secretary, Stuart Whitehead, are not salaried, and meet periodically to review finances and prioritise future projects.

A spokesman for Amnesty said: "The involvement of senior legal figures, including Lords Hoffman and Bingham, with Amnesty International charity work is a matter of public record and we were surprised when Gen Pinochet's solicitors wrote to us about it. If Gen Pinochet's team are raising this question now, it is a sign of how desperate they have become."



Way forward... Karen and Stephen Armstrong who survived the Omagh bomb on August 15, with newborn Lucy at Altnagelvin hospital in Derry last weekend

IRA reviews arms logjam

John Mullin

THE IRA leadership last weekend staged a rare conference to assess the logjam over the decommissioning of terrorist weapons which is threatening the Good Friday agreement.

Security sources said the two-day meeting took place in Co Cavan, just inside the republic. About 60 delegates were involved, but there is no indication of the outcome.

IRA army conventions are unusual. The last one, in May, paved the way for Sinn Féin to take up its places in the Northern Ireland assembly. A similar change would be needed if the IRA was to embrace decommissioning, which is banned under its constitution.

The meeting came as Gerry Adams, Sinn Féin president, repeated his criticism of First Minister David Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionists. He accused him of backtracking on an agreement brokered by Tony Blair last week on the make-up of Northern Ireland's ministries and cross-border bodies.

Mr Trimble meanwhile warned that the province could be facing a re-run of the Sunningdale fiasco of 1974 — the last attempt at devolution. He said the reason the power-

sharing executive collapsed 24 years ago was because nationalists were too ambitious in seeking powers for cross-border bodies. "There are dangers in history repeating itself."

The exchanges came as the leaders of eight Northern Ireland political parties met in Washington on Tuesday to be honoured for their part in producing the agreement.

The row also cast a pall over the Nobel Peace Prize, to be awarded jointly to Mr Trimble and SDLP leader John Hume in Oslo on Thursday. It was meant to recognise the new beginnings, but Ulster Unionists and the SDLP are divided.

Mr Blair, who has visited Belfast twice in recent days, is determined to find a solution before Christmas in order to rush through the legislation in time for the handover of powers in February.

The IRA owed up to a 26-year wrong when it admitted it had killed Jean McConville, a 37-year-old Belfast widow with 10 children, and secretly buried her body in an undisclosed location.

The IRA abducted, murdered and secretly buried at least 14 people during the Troubles, and the families have waged a long battle to have their bodies returned so that they can have proper funerals.

In Brief

FORMER Tory cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken is to stand trial at the Old Bailey on charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice relating to the collapse in June last year of his High Court libel action against the Guardian and Granada TV's World In Action.

POLICE officers who were traumatised by attending to victims after the 1989 Hillsborough disaster lost a landmark House of Lords ruling for compensation that will limit the rights of emergency service workers to claim damages for psychological injuries.

THE Office of Fair Trading is investigating Camelot after complaints that the National Lottery operator has used unfair tactics to squeeze out competitors to its Instant scratchcard.

POLICE were forced to justify their decision to deploy more than 500 police officers in the largest drugs operation London has seen when it emerged that it had netted only £80,000 worth of cannabis.

SCIENTISTS have warned that the chubbier's favourite drug, Ecstasy, could trigger long-term damage to vital brain cells called serotonin neurons, which control moods.

THE St John Ambulance has launched an inquiry after three men were jailed for sexual abuse of cadets over a 23-year period.

PLANS to reduce the legal blood alcohol limit from 80mg to 50mg are to be abandoned by the Government to allow police to concentrate on persistent drivers who ignore the present limit.

MORE than half the solicitors found guilty of misusing clients' money continue in practice, according to the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal.

FAMILY doctor Harold Shipman has been charged with murdering two more of his women patients, bringing to eight the number of charges he faces.

FORMER hostages Camilla Carr and Jon James, who were freed in September after being held for 14 months by Chechen rebels, are to marry in the spring.

PROPOSED changes to speed up house buying would mean sellers having to meet much more of the costs of a sale, including an information pack with a survey. But the housing industry warned that the changes would have to be compulsory.

THE REV Dr John Brown, the father of Chancellor Gordon Brown, has died at the age of 84.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1998

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Rail firm charged with manslaughter

Keith Harper

GREAT Western, an operator of the former InterCity trains, was last week served with seven charges of corporate manslaughter over the 1997 Southall rail crash in which seven people died.

The company faces unlimited fines for the accident, which happened when a Swansea to London Great Western express collided with an empty freight train at Southall, west London, in September last year. The freight train had been crossing the line in the path of the express.

The legal case is the most serious to be brought since rail privatisation and follows a long investigation by the British Transport Police.

In another case still pending, Railtrack and two unnamed officials are facing manslaughter charges for causing the death of a train driver who was hit by a passing train while making a trackside telephone call at Longsight, Manchester.

No charges have been laid against any employee for the Southall accident, in which 147 people were injured. But the driver of the passenger train, Larry Harrison, is due to appear in court this week on manslaughter charges.

Meanwhile Railtrack is expected to be ordered to improve safety standards. After a year-long inquiry the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has found that Railtrack consistently fails to meet the Railway Inspectorate's standards. Its

report is likely to lead to the Government handing rail safety controls to an independent body outside Railtrack, the privatised company that maintains the track and infrastructure.

Prohibition notices issued by the Railway Inspectorate rose from four to 19 in the past year. Notices are issued as a last resort when the infrastructure becomes a danger to the public and railway staff.

The order for improved safety standards comes on the 10th anniversary of the Clapham rail crash, in which 35 people died. A faulty signal circuit was blamed for that accident. The HSE will tell Railtrack to fit a new train protection and warning system throughout the railways at a cost of £152 million.

Transmission beacons will be placed on the track to trigger emergency braking if a train is about to pass a red signal. The system is said to provide a higher degree of train protection, and might have prevented the Southall crash. It does not give the same guarantees for safety as Automatic Train Protection, one of the main recommendations after the Clapham accident. But the system, which operates on Eurostar services, was rejected by both British Rail and Railtrack as too expensive: it would cost up to £1 billion to install.

The HSE's final move will be to order the withdrawal of all slam-door carriages by 2007. It says the stock is far too old and "its crashworthiness falls well below modern standards".

Local polls could run fox hunters to ground

Lucy Ward

THE idea of holding local polls on fox hunting, based on the principle that it would be banned unless its supporters persuaded voters otherwise, is to be backed by ministers, it emerged last week.

The move to put the onus on hunt supporters to fight for the right to hunt locally — rather than forcing opponents to mobilise backing to outlaw it — would please critics of hunting, who now believe referenda are the likeliest route the Government will take in reflecting pressure from Labour MPs for a ban.

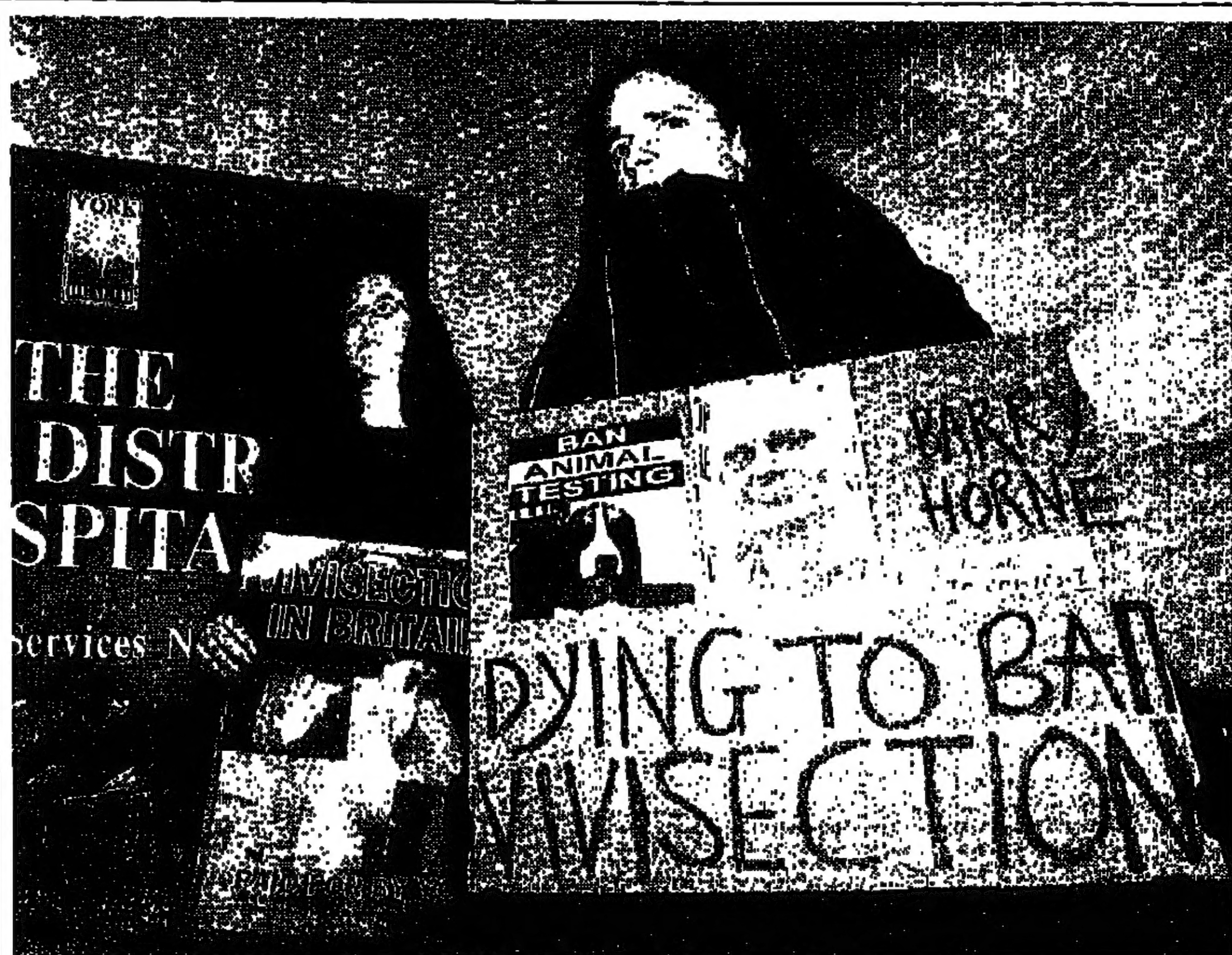
Discussions are going on between the Home Secretary Jack Straw and MPs keen to end fox hunting to thrust out details of a referendum scheme. The key sticking

points are whether ballots should be based on opting in or opting out of a nationwide blanket hunting ban; the geographical area covered by a referendum; and the way a ballot should be triggered.

But the suggestion that the presumption would be a ban unless local areas fought for an exemption infuriated hunting supporters, who oppose referendum proposals and want "politics removed from the issue altogether".

MPs, including Michael Foster, the Labour member for Worcester whose private member's bill to outlaw hunting with hounds failed to become law earlier this year, have held some half-dozen meetings with Mr Straw and other Home Office ministers since March.

MPs made clear at a meeting with



Animal rights protesters in York last week supporting Barry Horne's hunger strike

Hunger striker defiant over animal rights

ANIMAL rights campaigner Barry Horne is on the verge of slipping into a coma after nearly nine weeks on hunger strike, writes Will Woodward.

Mr Horne is determined to fast until a royal commission is announced to look into animal welfare, which Labour promised to support before the 1997 election. "I remain determined to expose this Government's lies and

hypocrisy in breaking its pre-election promises."

He repeated that he would call off his protest if the Government agreed to set up a royal commission "or similar independent body" to examine animal experimentation issues.

Horne, aged 46, is at York hospital. He was moved from Full Sutton Prison, East Yorkshire, where he is serving 18 years for

firebombing animal rights targets on the Isle of Wight in 1994.

Friends believe he is unlikely to last the week as his potassium levels have fallen dangerously low. He has lost vision in one eye and hearing in one ear.

The Animal Rights Militia said it would assassinate 10 supporters of vivisection if Horne dies. Security has been stepped up at animal testing laboratories.

Colour test for cervical cancer

Sarah Boseley

ATEST devised at Cambridge University may end the scandals that break over cervical screening, the Cancer Research Campaign claimed this week.

The test is a refinement of the screening process. Although it is only at a very early stage — it has been tried on only 58 smear slides — the Health Secretary, Frank Dobson, promised he would find the money to introduce it nationwide if the next three years of clinical trials bore out its potential.

The scientists have found a way of marking abnormal cells on a smear slide in a different colour so that they stand out.

Screening saves the lives of about 4,000 women a year by detecting the early changes in pre-cancerous cells. But, said Nick Coleman, lecturer in pathology at Cambridge, there are 300,000 to 500,000 cells per slide. In a 15-minute examination under a microscope "abnormalities are extremely easy to miss with the standard test".

The test has emerged from work on the way in which DNA replicates

itself. The scientists — Ron Laskey, Gareth Williams and Dr Coleman — have found a way of using antibodies to home in on proteins, called Cdc6 and Mcm5, which are only present in cells which may replicate. Cervical smear cells should not be dividing, so any with these molecules must be potentially cancerous.

The antibodies can be stained with a fluorescent or coloured dye, marking out abnormal cells. In the 58 cervical smear slides so far examined, the scientists had a 100 per cent success in detecting abnormalities that they knew were there, and found abnormal cells on three slides that had been passed by screeners.

"We feel that it should be possible to close the loophole in the existing screening procedure," said Prof Laskey.

The Cancer Research Campaign, which has financed the work over the past 15 years, has spent £50,000 on patenting the test in every country where it may be relevant.

They have signed a contract with a Californian company, diaDex, which will begin clinical trials in 18 months.

Post Office free to invest

Nicholas Bannister

THE Post Office is to be freed to make big foreign takeovers and to keep more of its huge profits under government proposals announced on Monday. But the commercial freedoms announced by the Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, fall short of those wanted by the Post Office management and recommended by a House of Commons select committee.

The PO is to be allowed to borrow money to finance expansion projects — expected to total £1 billion in the next few years — but such schemes will have to be approved by the Department of Trade and Industry and the Treasury. However, such borrowings will be counted as part of public borrowing, and could leave Mr Mandelson having to fight the Treasury for approval for the money.

In recent years the PO has been powerless as foreign post offices have moved into the British market, creaming off international business and taking over companies in the transportation, printing, warehousing and courier business.

Two years ago, for example, the Dutch post office spent more than £1.2 billion buying the TNT global transport business, while the German post office, which owns 25 per cent of the DHL international courier company, this year spent £223 million on a stake in Securicor's parcel operation, and last week acquired a 68 per cent stake in a French parcel distributor.

Mr Mandelson said the PO would have an arm's length relationship with government, which would have to approve the organisation's five-year strategic plan. This would give the PO the freedom to invest, price commercially and borrow. It would continue to have to deliver letters at a standard price.

Senior PO executives had been hoping Mr Mandelson would go for full or partial privatisation. But they were prepared to settle for the recommendation that the organisation's status should be changed to that of an independent, publicly owned corporation.

Under the new arrangements, the Government will take only 40 per cent of PO profits, compared with about 80 per cent in recent years.

Romanian refugees housed in hospital

Rory Carroll

SIXTY Romanian women and children on Monday bedded down on camp beds in a disused hospital ward, baffled by a furore breaking over them.

Protests by Kent residents at the decision to house the asylum seekers at a hospital — albeit in an unfurnished 1903 smallpox isolation unit unsuitable for modern treatment — were greeted with disbelief.

"Do sick English people want to be there?" asked one woman, through an interpreter.

Managers at Joyce Green hospi-

tal, Dartford, Kent, tried to defuse criticism that an overstretched health service should not be accommodating people who enter Britain illegally, and predicted they would be moved by the end of the week.

A straw poll of Dartford locals suggested most were convinced that patients had been evicted to make room for the Romanians, even though the ward was closed two years ago because there was no lift.

The women and children were among 103 Cypriotes found hidden in a lorry at the Dartford freight terminal on December 3, the biggest group to enter Britain illegally. The

42 men are being held in detention centres by the immigration service.

Most of the asylum seekers came from Tundir, a village in east Romania, said Dan Dumitriu, a translator working for social services.

They fled to Britain to escape persecution from police and government agencies, said Tamara Simina, aged 33, with six children. "They didn't like us. They wanted us to go away, go anywhere. The journey was horrible."

The Government plans to fine truck drivers £2,000 if their lorries are found to contain illegal immigrants as stowaways.

Doctors 'close ranks' over negligence cases

Sarah Boseley and Audrey Gillan

VICTIMS of medical negligence, their families and lawyers are calling for fundamental reforms to the National Health Service complaints procedure and for doctors and hospitals to admit their mistakes and apologise when things go wrong.

A Guardian investigation has discovered there is disquiet at the highest levels at the refusal of doctors to be open with patients who have accidentally been harmed. There is particular concern about the distress suffered by families who have lost a child and, in spite of years of asking, have never been told how their son or daughter died.

The massive payments and profuse apologies by hospitals in the civil courts to some patients — usually those left with brain damage or profound disability needing a lifetime of care — mask the plight of parents who can by law be awarded no more than £7,500 in compensation for a child's life. Once a hospital has paid this sum into court, often without even admitting liability or saying sorry, the family loses legal aid and has nowhere else to go.

Lawyers agree the medical profession closes ranks, either afraid or unable to say sorry.

Russell Levy, of Leigh Day, believes that the whole culture of medicine is at fault. "Doctors have this incredible fear of criticism and lit-

igation... Focusing on what has happened really will prevent things happening and far fewer people will want to complain and consider litigation."

Doctors have the protection of the law in their refusal to reveal exact details, as Will Powell discovered after the death of 10-year-old son Robbie. He took the local GPs to court, suing for the trauma he claimed he and his wife had suffered as a result of what he claims to be the cover-up over Robbie's death.

The doctors applied for the case to be struck out. "They said they didn't have any obligation to tell me the full truth about my son," he says.

The High Court supported Mr Powell, but the Appeal Court backed the doctors and the House of Lords refused to hear his appeal. He is now taking the case to the European Court, claiming an infringement of his civil liberties. The General Medical Council, following the Powell judgment, told doctors that they had a moral obligation, if not a legal one, to be frank with patients.

● The number of people having to wait more than six months to see a hospital specialist, a breach of the Patient's Charter, has soared almost 16 per cent in three months.

The rise lends support to claims that the Government is cutting waiting lists for operations — in pursuit of its pre-election promise to reduce them by 100,000 — only by allowing backlogs to build up elsewhere.

John 13:16

Gadafy still proves elusive

THE Libyan People's Congress, which began one of its rare sessions this week, is expected to consider whether to hand over the two suspects in the Lockerbie case for trial in the Netherlands. This follows Kofi Annan's meeting with Colonel Gadafy last weekend. But it is not clear that a deal is in prospect, even though the United States and Britain have gone a long way toward promising that the Libyan regime will have immunity from the consequences of what it may or may not have done 10 years ago. No witnesses from Libya would be called, Gadafy has been given to understand, and the trial would focus solely on the guilt or innocence of the two men charged with the murder of the 270 people killed when the plane went down. In return for putting the two Lockerbie suspects on the book, to put it bluntly, Gadafy gets off it — along with any leaders in other countries who may have had a hand in Lockerbie. He gets more, in particular an effective end to sanctions. These, while not of great consequence economically, are a political problem for Gadafy because Libya's well-off class resents the isolation they impose and especially the travel difficulties the suspension of air links has created.

Against this the Libyan leader has to weigh the political disadvantages of handing over the two suspects, sacrificing them in a way their families and clan constituencies will presumably resent. The difficulties Gadafy is still apparently making no doubt arise from his assessment of the balance between these two factors. He would have a better chance of offsetting the disadvantages if he could point to a complete lifting of sanctions, but he has been offered only a suspension because of other matters, including a second aircraft bombing in which Libyans may have been involved. He may be holding out for a complete end to sanctions, while maintaining his demand that, if convicted, the two should not serve their sentence in Scotland. Since he knows that Britain and the United States will never concede this, it gives him an escape route if he decides that a deal at this stage is too dangerous for him politically.

Nato searches for a new role

WHEN Nato's foreign and defence ministers meet in Brussels this week, their inquiries about the latest Anglo-French declaration on defence are unlikely to be animated. Britain's defence secretary, George Robertson, trumpeted the agreement signed at St. Malo last week as the start of a new era in defence co-operation. But this new era has the character of a New Year's resolution. It rings with good intentions, has minimal substance, and of course we heard it last year and the year before that. What Nato's other members will be wanting to know is whether any concrete changes were agreed by Britain and France.

There has long been talk of developing a formula for the Europeans to shoulder more of the Nato burden, both in terms of cash spending and the contribution of men and hardware. Equally, there has long been talk of giving muscle to the European Union's common foreign and security policy. The problem was the relationship between these two. In the days when France refused to play its part in Nato, suggestions for giving Europe its own defence identity were viewed nervously in Washington as a device for developing an alternative to Nato. British governments shared the United States' suspicions, while the Europeans saw the British hesitation as proof of Albion's incorrigible aversion to everything continental.

With the end of the cold war a "new era" dawned. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant discussions on Nato's future could take place in a calmer atmosphere. France and Britain started to talk about defence co-operation. The crises in Bosnia and Kosovo demanded intervention, as well as exposing the weakness of Europe's military structures. Neither Britain nor France could put together a rapid reaction force of several thousand men without technical intelligence from US satellites. To project more power over a longer distance and keep it engaged for several months would require US transport aircraft and logistical support.

The St Malo agreement resolves none of these

difficulties. As a sop to the Americans it talks of the capacity for "autonomous" rather than "independent" action, but does not say what items are to be procured to make that possible. It avoids the thorny issue of Europe's security architecture, and whether the Western European Union, which groups those nations that are members of both Nato and the EU, is to fade away, or grow stronger. Above all, it says nothing about the two major decisions which the US wants the member states to reach by April, when Nato celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The first is whether Nato should expand its shadow to cover the whole of Eurasia, with authority to act anywhere in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and central Asia. The US is pushing for such a shift to get broader automatic backing for its global pretensions. The second point is whether such moves could be undertaken without authorisation from the UN Security Council. Under Nato's original mandate these issues never arose. It was axiomatic that Nato was an alliance for mutual protection, and any state had the right under Article 5 of the UN charter to use force in self-defence. Nato's own founding treaty recognised the "primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security".

To undermine the UN's primacy and turn Nato into a regional or global policeman is an even more dramatic shift than Nato's absorption of three former Warsaw Pact states of central Europe into full membership. This year's Kosovo crisis brought a consensus within Nato for intervention, though the issue of UN authorisation was fudged. To go from a single emergency to a permanent change in policy requires a much fuller debate. It would be better not to push it through before April.

Blair upstages luckless Hague

WILLIAM Hague's lucklessness continues to be an enduring theme. Last week's twist in the saga should have brought a rare flash of good fortune, as he sprung a surprise on the House of Commons, revealing a backroom deal Labour had apparently sought with the Conservative leadership in the Lords. Mr Hague hoped to ambush the Prime Minister, seeking to expose him before his own party as a backslider and compromiser on a cherished Labour principle: the removal of the hereditary members from the upper house. For a second the plan appeared to work. Labour backbenchers were instantly hushed as Mr Hague revealed that their leader had covertly plotted to compromise on the principle by allowing a vestigial group of 91 hereditaries to retain their place in Britain's most exclusive club. That should have placed Tony Blair squarely on the receiving end of backbench fury and accusations of sell-out.

But that's not how it worked out. Instead it was William Hague who wound up as the victim of the manoeuvre. All his bombshell did was leave a gaping crater inside the Conservative party. Far from being forced on to the defensive, Mr Blair was able to attack Mr Hague as utterly at odds with his own leader in the Lords. The Prime Minister skewered the Tory leader both for humiliating his man in the Lords — by overruling him in public — and for exposing himself as less than fully in charge of his own party in Parliament. More deeply, Mr Hague has again driven a wholly avoidable wedge through the Conservative party, splitting Tory MPs from Tory peers on the one issue that is likely to dominate the next political year.

The politics, then, Mr Blair got right. But what of not wavering? We would like them gone from Britain's legislature. Aristocratic blood should not carry with it an automatic place in the nation's law-making body. But more important than the purity of a principled argument is the realisation of it. If Labour, Liberal Democrats and cross-benchers in the Lords are all convinced that the plan represents the only way this vital reform can happen, without falling victim to ermine guerrilla warfare, then it is an irritating but acceptable compromise. Progressives must remain vigilant, however, watching to ensure the 91 escapees do not quietly become part of the Lords furniture — unless, of course, they are democratically chosen.

The Lords' compromise appears to have been a good day's work by the Government. The Tories are in disarray, their leader badly damaged, while an essential piece of constitutional reform may have a better life expectancy than before.

Noose tightens for the architects of evil

Martin Woollacott

WHEN General Radislav Krstic appeared in court in The Hague on Monday, the proceedings of the international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia underwent a qualitative change. The tribunal has grown in stature since its foundation, but it needed to deal with suspects who had overall command responsibility rather than individuals personally involved in torture and killing. Krstic is the first senior officer or politician suspected of such overall responsibility for war crimes to come before the court.

It is not only that the Bosnian Serb general, arrested by United States troops last week, commanded the units which took Srebrenica in 1995 and whose soldiers, or some of them, were then responsible for the worst single atrocity of the Bosnian war. Nor that the Dutch people will fasten on every detail of his evidence for whatever light it can throw on the behaviour of their own soldiers, the United Nations garrison of the Srebrenica safe area who so signally failed to protect it.

What Krstic could also provide is information going beyond his own role to illuminate the responsibility of General Ratko Mladic, to whom Krstic reported directly, of Radovan Karadzic, and of senior people in Belgrade, up to and including Slobodan Milosevic himself.

The trail that leads to these men is already heavy with clues. But by bringing certain connections into the open, the examination of Krstic may not only seal the fate of Mladic and Karadzic, but make it impossible for the contradictory and repugnant Western and Russian policy of dealing with Milosevic as a partner as well as an adversary to continue for much longer. In this way the tribunal could become, as many of its supporters envisaged from the start, an instrument not only of justice, but of enforcement and intervention in former Yugoslavia as potent in its way as military force or economic sanctions.

Once again last week the dismal charade of treating the man most responsible for the Balkan wars as if he were a responsible statesman was enacted in Belgrade. Christopher Hill, the US mediator on Kosovo, handed Milosevic a draft peace plan. Milosevic handed Hill a counter-plan. Both solemnly promised to study the respective documents. There may be no practical alternative to such encounters for the time being, but the context of Western and Russian policy-making is changing.

In the US the argument that there can be no fundamental improvement in either Bosnia or Kosovo until the regime in Belgrade changes is gaining more support. The State Department spokesman, James Rubin, last week responded to criticisms that US policy was sustaining Milosevic in power by saying that the Serbian leader was part of the problem rather than part of the solution, and that he could be no guarantor of stability in Kosovo.

Rubin's remarks produced a predictable flurry of attacks on the US in the rump Yugoslav parliament and in the controlled press. As for Russia, while the government re-

mains opposed to the use of military force in most circumstances, it is well known that Yevgeny Primakov has no liking for Milosevic, and no confidence in his future.

Milosevic has to an extent brought this increased hostility on himself by his recent actions, which combine an assault on what remains of free institutions in Serbia with a purge of some of the more rational and independent of his own officials, as well as what looks like preparations for a confrontation with Montenegro.

The legal hobbling of independent newspapers and broadcasters, and the dismissals of independent academics at Belgrade university were followed by a purge of his own inner circle. Some of these people are out because, whatever their complicity in Milosevic's policies in the past, they objected to the brutal campaign in Kosovo or to actions that now risk a clash with Montenegro.

The possibility of a crisis over Montenegro has reminded those who have to deal with Milosevic that this mischievous maker never sits still. He feeds on crises, which he both creates and then exploits, first making war and then making peace, and deriving momentum from both processes.

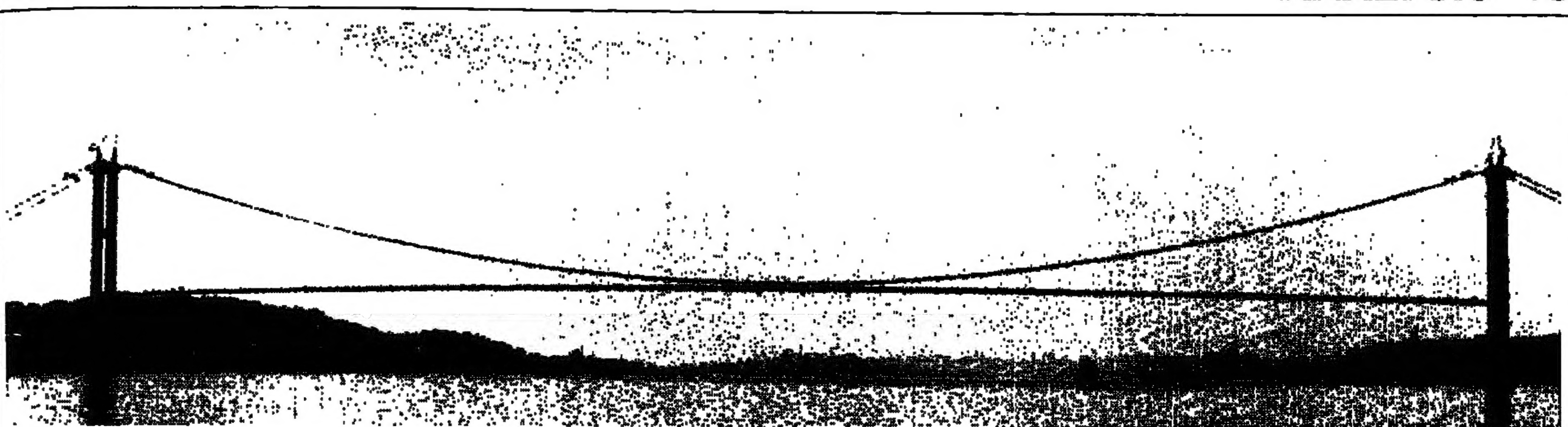
What is also clarifying the mind of the outside powers is a consideration of how costly the business of coddling Milosevic has become. At the end of this year the mandate of Nato's stabilisation force in Bosnia has to be renewed. The UN representative in Bosnia, Elizabeth Rehn, has estimated that the 33,000-strong force will be needed for another four years. Some think it will be much longer.

THE COST of the 2,000 international verifiers destined for Kosovo, and of the extradition force that will be stationed in Macedonia to get them out in the event of trouble, now has to be added to the Bosnia sums. On top of these military and quasi-military costs, there is the expense of the civil effort in Bosnia and of economic aid in Bosnia and Kosovo. For Russia, the cost of supplying Serbia with free gas and oil — without which Serbia's economy would finally collapse — must be a serious consideration for a country whose finances are under strain.

The West and Russia possess a dual key which, turned together, could hasten the end of the Milosevic regime. The West sustains Milosevic by treating him as the most important diplomatic partner in the Balkans. Russia sustains him by giving him help whenever Western military action is threatened and by the vital energy supplies. Russia is constrained by the state of opinion in the Duma, where support for Serbia is a test issue for the communists and the nationalists. That is a complicating factor, but the effort ought still to be made to co-ordinate international policy.

Following General Krstic's arrest, the indictment of Milosevic must at some point become an issue. Sooner or later the problem will be one of managing the transition in Serbia itself, to ensure that it is not bloody, and that it leads to a regime that is a distinct improvement on that of Milosevic.

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Bridge over troubled waters

Its Bosphorus crossing links Europe and Asia, yet despite Turkey's geopolitical importance and long membership of Nato, it batters in vain on Europe's door. **Stephen Bates and Martin Walker** ask if Ankara deserves ostracism from the Brussels club

IT IS ironic that Europe's leaders chose to meet in Vienna this week to discuss their worsening relations with Turkey. Ever since the Turks first laid siege to the city in 1529 there has been a legacy of misunderstanding, mistrust and mutual incomprehension between them and western Europeans.

The choice of Vienna was accidental — Austria currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union — but it was apposite given that this has been one of the most difficult years for the European-Turkish relationship.

First there was the Turkish government's decision to end its attempt to join the EU after years of constant rejections. Now a trade war is threatened over Italy's refusal to extradite the Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, said last week that the EU would stand solid with Italy if Ankara imposed sanctions. Brussels emphasised that not all EU member states necessarily regard Ocalan as a terrorist, although his PKK organisation has killed thousands of civilians during a violent 20-year campaign. Europeans cannot understand why Turkey should so misconstrue their reluctance to hand over Ocalan without due process of law to a regime which would so like to hang him high (although the death penalty has not been used in Turkey since 1984). For their part Turks cannot understand why the EU should spurn them in this matter as in their bid to join the European club.

"I was ever thus. In the dictionary of quotations, from Shakespeare to Mozart, Dickens to Gladstone and Lloyd George, the Turks get insulting citations. From Lawrence of Arabia, allegedly raped in the desert, to the movie *Midnight Express* and the fugitive financier Aziz Nadir, a contemptuous image has built up around a nation whose people are otherwise acknowledged to be both cultivated and friendly, living in a country with a long and civilised past and an economically dynamic and Western-orientated present.

Consult any of the last drivers of many of Europe's cities (those who are not themselves Turkish, that is) and you will be regaled with hostility to immigrants, all lumped together as Turks or, more insultingly, "shish kebabs". Turkey has been waiting to join the EU now for nearly 40 years and, for all many

Europeans care, could wait another 40. It joined the queue in 1959, way before Britain, but, following a decision at the Luxembourg summit late last year, it has been placed effectively last. It looks as if it will not be admitted until well into the next millennium after Romania and Bulgaria — countries with much less secure economic and political bases.

This is despite Turkey's important strategic position, no less so now than in the cold war. It controls the water supply to neighbours such as Syria, and commands the likely pipeline routes for the world's next great untapped oil fields in Azerbaijan. Turkey's problem was that its latest bid to join the EU followed the end of the cold war. As President Süleyman Demirel remarked bitterly: "When the defence of European civilisation [against communism] was at stake, they didn't say we were Turks and Muslims."

The European Commission concedes that the country is well on the way to qualifying for admission on economic grounds. "Turkey has all the hallmarks of a market economy, possessing a well-developed institutional and legislative framework, a dynamic private sector and liberal trade rules. The economy has considerable potential for growth and has shown great adaptability, which has contributed significantly to its modernisation."

Although per capita gross domestic product is only a third of the EU average and inflation approached 70 per cent last year, Turkey is growing fast: exports have risen by more than 20 per cent since 1995, half of which, now go to Europe. Agriculture's share of gross national product, a key transitional indicator, is down to 14 per cent. This is despite a trade loss averaging \$7 billion a year since links to Iraq were cut after the Gulf war. Cutting off the Iraqi oil pipeline has cost Turkey \$27 billion since 1991, and a third of its 300,000-strong lorry fleet has had to find alternative work. As a senior EU diplomat remarked: "Turkey has proved a reliable ally internationally. It has adhered to United Nations sanctions despite the cost. It is the world's only real Muslim democracy. It has a large and stable middle class. It is a consumer society. It would be a glittering prize for the EU."

Turkey's participation in Nato — it has the second largest army in the alliance — and its pivotal location athwart the Soviet-Black Sea fleet's

only exit to open seas, explains the long indulgence the country enjoyed throughout the cold war. The United States' subsequent devolution is based on Turkey's pivotal position in the Middle East, perfectly placed to dominate the eastern Mediterranean and Central Asia. It can launch air strikes and patrols against Iraq, and provide pipeline routes for oil from the Caspian basin that will not have to use the Russian pipeline monopoly. The discreet military co-operation between Turkey and Israel, with joint exercises and freedom to train in Turkish airspace is a second bonus for Washington.

There is a further factor, one that Richard Perle, former assistant secretary at the Pentagon, suggests may be the most important of all at a time of American worries about Islamic fundamentalism. "Turkey is a country where most people subscribe to the Islamic faith, but it is a secular state, allied and strategically oriented to the West, with elected civilian governments, democratic procedures, an independent judiciary, free markets and a free press."

"This makes Turkey virtually unique in the Islamic world, and offers an important alternative model of pro-Western democracy to the growing numbers of Arabs who suspect that their countries do not have to be run in the way they have been."

Turkey's long wait was not eased last year when Helmut Kohl, the then German chancellor, chose a meeting of Christian Democrat leaders in Brussels to announce firmly that as far as he was concerned Turkey could never join the EU. "Turkish membership of the EU is not possible," he said.

What he was really worried about was immigration. There are an estimated 2 million Turks living in the EU (out of its population of 11 million Muslims). One worker in four in the German car industry is Turk-

ish. The Turks have not been made welcome, although there are signs that the new German government might be prepared to offer citizenship to some of its Turkish residents. But they have not been a burden on social security systems, as recent Belgian figures show.

Only last month Austria's foreign minister, Wolfgang Schäffer, was telling the European Parliament that no promise could be made — yet, as a recent book notes, Turkish workers are "apparently thought good enough to clean the floors in the Commission buildings in Brussels".

Greece too remains implacably opposed to Turkish membership of the EU, to such an extent that it may block all enlargement if there is an accommodation with the Turks over Cyprus. It has already done its best to stymie EU aid to its old rival, in contravention of the customs agreement signed three years ago. Turkish occupation of northern Cyprus has given Greece an incentive to oppose Turkish accession: the prospect of (Greek) southern Cyprus joining gives the EU its most knotty single problem.

THE Americans and their Nato allies in northern Europe used to be confident that Greek-Turkish strains could be kept under control. When the cold war ended, the numbers of tanks and guns on Nato's central front had to be slashed by 40 per cent. Nato shipped most to Greece and Turkey — just as the Balkan wars to their north got under way — on the grounds that this would be cheaper than scrapping them. The fact that weapons to be scrapped in order to seal the peace in central Europe were finding their way to the fringes of a real war zone in the Balkans was an irony lost on the Nato planners.

The articulation of Turkish interests isn't helped by endemic political instability. (Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz lost office late last month.) With a track record of three coups in the 20 years before 1980 and a strong presence in poli-

tics since, the country's armed forces stand ready to intervene again. Only last week the general staff warned politicians to take care. Non-religious parties are strong but unable to coalesce, leaving a gap for Muslim fundamentalists. Observers see recent support for Islamic parties as more of a protest than evidence of religious conversion, a strike against the personal liberties and instability which brought down the coalition government. None of this helps Turkey in presenting a coherent image to the outside world.

The country, for all its desire for European acceptance, has been slow to acknowledge or appreciate genuine concerns, particularly over human and social rights. Its underpaid, corrupt, unaccountable and sometimes brutal police force has, according to EU sources, proved much more effective than Turkey's suave diplomatic service and the millions spent on public relations in promoting a certain picture of the country abroad.

It is Turkey's human rights record that gives the EU every opportunity to block membership. The recent Commission report was scathing: "The actual upholding of civil and political rights enshrined in the Turkish constitution and law remains problematic. Cases of torture, disappearances and extra-judicial executions are recorded regularly. Freedom of expression is not fully assured and is subject to numerous restrictions... many of the cases put into question the effective control and supervision of the security forces."

It is the reverse side of the great westernisation process inaugurated by Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey in the 1920s. He may have pledged the state to a secular, Western future, but he also bequeathed a legacy of authoritarianism and intolerance of dissent. Although civilian politicians say they are committed to improving human rights, the legacy of distrust remains.



Atatürk and after

1614 Ottoman empire — allied with Axis Powers — enters first world war. Conflict in Palestine, Arabia and Gallipoli.
October 1918 Deceased, signs Mudrow Armistice.
November 1918 Anatolia occupied by Allies.
Displacement of empire.
1919-1922 Post-war occupation and war of independence. Emergence of army general, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as leader of National Assembly.
July 1923 Mustafa Kemal gives new Turkish State independence.
October 1923 occupation of Istanbul by Atatürk.
1924-26 Kemal's premiership.

1924 Caliphate abolished.
1934 Kemal receives honorary title Atatürk, "father of the Turk".
1938 Atatürk dies.
1939-45 Turkey neutral during second world war.
June 1945 In 1945, 1948 Multi-party system introduced. US gives economic aid. Turkey becomes military bridgehead.
1952 Joins Nato.
1950s Conflict with Greece (over Cyprus) and natural resources of Aegean.
1964 Becomes associate member of European Economic Community.
1970 Domestic political unrest.
1974 Coup leads to end of Cyprus.

1980 Military coup. Kenan Evren becomes president.
1982 Civilian rule restored. Evren continues as president.
1984 Fighting with PKK over Kurdistan.
1988 Tansu Ciller becomes first woman prime minister.
1989 Islamist Welfare Party becomes largest party in National Assembly.
1993 Secular True Path Party and Welfare Party form government.
1998 The Welfare Party is outlawed by the Constitutional Court.

Jas Gawronski

Asia slump forces Boeing to slash jobs

Mark Tran in New York

BOEING, the world's biggest aircraft manufacturer, is to axe up to 48,000 jobs over the next two years — 20,000 more than previously announced — in a move the company blames on the Asian economic crisis.

The US planemaker warned last week that next year's financial results would be sharply down from previous forecasts. The job cuts amount to a 20 per cent reduction in Boeing's workforce from 238,000 in June.

The cutback in production is likely to have a big impact on 350 British suppliers. Seventy per cent of Boeing's European suppliers are based in Britain.

British Aerospace, which makes small components for the affected models, and engine-maker Rolls-Royce said it was

too early to tell if any action was needed. Smiths Industries, which manufactures electrical controls for Boeing, has cut back its operations.

Boeing shares plunged on the news, dragging down Wall Street. Alan Mulally, Boeing Commercial Airplanes president, blamed Asia's economic slump for the company's latest manoeuvres.

Boeing's decision to scale back production of passenger planes did not surprise Wall Street. But analysts were stunned by the downward revision of profit margins despite cost-cutting. Boeing said its commercial aircraft operating margin for 2000 could be 1 per cent to 3 per cent, a decline from the 1999 estimate.

Boeing has been offering discounts on its aircraft under in-

tense competitive pressure from Airbus Industrie, the European consortium.

It is still reeling from its decision in 1996 to crank up production to record levels, to meet booming demand from the world's airlines and to win orders against Airbus. But it could not deliver. Costs soared because of overtime payments, and assembly lines ground to a halt because parts did not arrive in time.

Last year Boeing took a \$4 billion charge and made a loss of \$178 million, its first in 50 years. It is still committed to delivering 550 planes this year, a record 620 in 1999 and 490 in 2000. Total sales in 1999 should come to \$58 billion, declining to \$50 billion for the following year.

Boeing said it would reduce

production of 747 jetliners from 3.5 to two aircraft a month late next year, and to one a month in early 2000 if market conditions failed to improve. Production of 757 jets will drop from five to four a month, and the 767 programme will drop from four to 3.5 aircraft a month in early 2000.

The latest jobs cuts augur poorly for negotiations between Boeing and its engineers next summer, to replace the present contract which expires next September. Boeing executives admit poor relations with their largest union helped trigger a 69-day walkout three years ago.

The size of the job cuts surprised Boeing employees. Union leaders said they were given no warning. "It's affected everyone pretty badly. Everybody's scared they're going to get laid off," said a worker on 777 jetliners at Boeing's Everett assembly plant.

In Brief

A SPECIAL session of the International Monetary Fund's policymaking Interim Committee is to be convened in Washington next month to implement emergency reforms and help head off a second bout of global economic turbulence. The move comes amid signs that the recent recovery in world markets is stalling. Meanwhile the World Bank said that more than a quarter of the population of developing countries — just over a billion people — will suffer falling living standards as a result of the crisis.

EUROPE'S central bankers ended months of complacency over the likely threat to the European economy from the global financial crisis when they announced a co-ordinated cut in interest rates, designed to boost growth and jobs across the continent. Germany and France led the way, cutting the cost of borrowing to 3 per cent, and only Italy remained out of line, settling on a rate of 3.5 per cent.

THE creation of the world's largest industrial company was confirmed with the \$77.2 billion alliance of Exxon and Mobil. The two groups aim to save \$2.8 billion from their combined operating costs of \$34 billion. The merger comes at a time when oil companies face a double bind — the lowest oil prices in more than 10 years and rising exploration costs.

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GEC drove forward its "strategic reshaping" under chief executive Lord Simpson by announcing 1,500 job losses in low-tech areas of its telecoms and defence electronics businesses.

LEADING shareholders in Barclays are understood to be telling the bank's top executives that they should follow former chief executive Martin Taylor's plans to split the group and seek mergers for the retail and corporate banking business.

ROYAL Bank of Scotland reported profits of just over \$1.6 billion, the highest yet achieved by a Scottish bank.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Starting rates December 7	Starting rates November 26
Australia	2.8624-2.8655	2.8292-2.8323
Austria	19.47-19.49	19.62-19.64
Belgium	57.09-57.10	57.04-57.05
Canada	2.5350-2.5376	2.5292-2.5320
Denmark	10.32-10.33	10.60-10.61
France	6.28-6.29	6.35-6.36
Germany	2.7688-2.7711	2.7897-2.7915
Hong Kong	12.78-12.80	12.77-12.78
Ireland	1.1184-1.1193	1.1224-1.1245
Italy	2.740-2.744	2.732-2.734
Japan	197.51-197.73	202.78-202.98
Netherlands	3.1208-3.1228	3.1454-3.1485
New Zealand	3.1997-3.1999	3.1294-3.1310
Norway	12.26-12.27	12.31-12.32
Portugal	263.87-264.23	268.02-268.41
Spain	226.95-226.98	227.24-227.35
Sweden	13.45-13.47	13.38-13.39
Switzerland	2.2095-2.2103	2.2094-2.2095
USA	1.0520-1.0522	1.0522-1.0510
ECU	1.4114-1.4130	1.4212-1.4228

Source: Reuters. Rates are for 100 units of foreign currency against 100 units of sterling.

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The Washington Post

Protests Intensify in Israeli Jails

Lee Hookstader in Jerusalem

HUNDREDS of Palestinian prisoners demanding to be freed from Israeli jails launched a hunger strike in an intensifying protest that has inflamed Jews and Arabs alike.

With President Clinton scheduled to arrive in Israel on Saturday for a three-day visit, the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement he brokered in Maryland last October is badly frayed. Violent street clashes have dominated media images in recent days, angry words are flying, and Israel has officially suspended further pullbacks from the occupied West Bank, a centerpiece of the U.S.-mediated deal.

American diplomats are worried that even if Clinton manages to patch things up while he is here, the peace pact could easily fall apart again after his departure. "It's hard to imagine that in this environment the trip can yield the reconciliation that Clinton had hoped would result from his visit," a U.S. official said.

On both sides, the drift toward confrontation appears so strongly driven by domestic politics that neither Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu nor Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has had the stomach to stand up to his constituency.

For Netanyahu, as always, the issue is maintaining his wobbly governing coalition and ensuring his political survival. He faces virulent right-wing opposition to further West Bank withdrawals, as well as a scheduled vote to dissolve the Israeli parliament and call early elections. Mindful of the risk, Netanyahu declared last week that there would be no new Israeli pullbacks until the Palestinians fulfilled a handful of new demands.

Arafat, too, has problems at home. The deal he agreed to at the Wye River Plantation six weeks ago calls for the release of 750 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails but says nothing about which ones.

When Israel released the first batch of 250 last month, the Palestinians were outraged that they included 150 common criminals. The deal, said Arafat and his aides, was for political prisoners to be freed.



Free at last: But Israel is dragging its heels over Palestinian releases

Surely they did not bargain for days at Wye for the liberation of car thieves, said Ahmed Tibi, a Palestinian spokesman.

Not so, said Netanyahu, and the State Department concurred: Nowhere in the agreement does it specify that the freed detainees be political prisoners. But the American stance has done nothing to defuse the anger among Palestinians, for whom the issue of prisoners is visceral.

Last weekend it burst into the open with demonstrations throughout the West Bank, which were put down by Israeli troops firing lethal rubber-coated bullets, and tear gas. The scenes of the wounded being carried off, bloodied and grimacing in pain, were reminiscent of the Palestinian intifada, the uprising that ended six years ago. At the same time, hundreds of the prisoners began a hunger strike that was joined by some of their families.

Even as the West Bank was exploding, Arafat was in Stockholm delivering a measured, conciliatory speech before the Swedish parliament. The address seemed an attempt to put things back on track with the Israelis.

Choosing his words carefully and forgoing his usual threat to unilaterally declare an independent Palestinian state next May, Arafat called for "a new political discourse." He pledged to make no alliance with any state hostile to Israel, stressed his commitment to fight terrorism and promote Israel's security, and committed himself to work out differences with the Jewish state through negotiations. The Swedes applauded heartily and said the ball was now in the Israeli's court.

Netanyahu rejected Arafat's overture and said the Palestinians must concede to Israel's position on the prisoners and rule out the option of declaring an independent state next May, when the Oslo peace process launched in 1993 expires.

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China Threatens Internet Subversives with Prison

Michael Laris in Beijing

BEFORE he and his computer were whisked away by police in March, Shanghai entrepreneur Lin Hai spent his nights trolling the Internet for e-mail addresses he could use to promote his online headhunting service, jobchina.com, a clearing house of resumes from China's educated elite for international clients like Motorola and IBM.

Hoping to leverage his 30,000-strong e-mail database, one of the largest such private lists in China, Lin also posted ads on electronic bulletin boards offering to sell or exchange the addresses, and once got a dollar each for a portion of them.

Last week Lin was put on trial for his online activities. In China's first Internet subversion case, Lin was accused of "inciting the overthrow of state power" by allegedly providing part of his database in the Washington-based electronic magazine Chinese VII. Reference, a pro-democracy magazine sent to 120,000 e-mail addresses inside China every 10 days.

Chinese authorities closed the four-hour trial for "national security" reasons, but details of the proceedings have emerged through Lin's legal counsel.

"The lawyer said he didn't have a very good feeling — that things won't be good for Lin Hai and he will probably be found guilty," said Xu Hong, Lin's wife, who was questioned by police for six hours to prevent her from waiting outside the courthouse as she had planned. Police also "persuaded" one member of Lin's legal team not to attend the trial in the northeastern province of Liaoning, Xu said.

The trial painted a stark picture of a Chinese legal system caught between recent efforts at reforms and its old show-trial habits. While changes instituted last year in criminal procedure law allowed Lin's lawyers to pre-

sent their side in court, they faced insurmountable obstacles in a trial that was clearly political.

No witnesses were allowed to testify in the secret proceedings. Prosecutors presented a list of 200 people who said they receive VIP Reference involuntarily. Prosecutors also described other evidence that was not produced in court. Lin's lawyers argued that a list of names was not proof that Lin provided the addresses, and said they should be allowed to see all evidence against their client. The three-judge panel overruled the defense lawyers.

Although Lin is not a dissident, he is being treated like one because his business model ran up against the Chinese government's growing unease about the free flow of ideas entering China via the Internet. While government policy continues to support the swift growth of the Internet, and the number of Chinese online has grown to 1.2 million and is expected to reach 10 million in five years, authorities in recent months have begun aggressively campaigning to increase surveillance on the network.

Lin's trial comes as police in three Chinese cities last week arrested and charged key organizers of the China Democratic Party in a significant move against China's fledgling opposition movement. Chinese authorities said that Xu Wenli, Qin Yongmin and Wang Youcai are suspected of "endangering state security."

China's vague laws on "state security" are used against opponents viewed as a threat to the Communist Party's monopoly on political power. Efforts began in June to found and officially register an opposition party. Chinese authorities had detained and released dozens of dissidents in the intervening months, but signaled last week through the arrests and stern public statements that they had lost patience.

Dollar next up for rollercoaster ride

The crisis may have to visit the United States before the world financial system is reformed, says Larry Elliott

IF THE 1970s were the decade of stagflation and the 1980s the decade of debt, the 1990s have been the decade of currency crises. Beginning with the pound's ejection from the European exchange rate mechanism in September 1992, there have been regular and increasingly virulent bouts of currency turbulence.

The presumption is that Brazil will be next on the list, and with the government of President Fernando Cardoso gripped in the pincers of economic contraction and an overvalued exchange rate, only the foolish would bet against it. Even now, the predators are beginning to gather.

Important though it is, Brazil may prove to be something of a sideshow, because there is an even bigger danger lurking — the risk of a collapse in the dollar. As yet, this possibility has yet to embed itself in the psyche of the global markets, and indeed may sound counter-intuitive given that unemployment in the United States is still falling.

But this complacency may soon be punctured, and indeed there were the first signs last week that the suckers' rally of the past two months has come to an end. The lay-offs at Boeing brought home an uncomfortable truth, namely that the earnings growth which the stock market bulls use to justify rocketing share prices simply are not coming through.

In the end, of course, what is happening to earnings and profits cannot be divorced from stock market performance. Profits drive investment and employment, and as such are the key component of growth.

So what is happening to profits in the US "miracle economy"? Far from rising exponentially, they have been dropping for the past year and are now declining at an annual rate of over 10 per cent. Margins are being squeezed by over-capacity, rising

employment costs and a deceleration in productivity growth.

As Ian Harwood of Dresdner Kleinwort Benson put it at his firm's seminar last week: "The Q3 year-on-year profits decline is the first since the early 1990s recession and — if history is any guide — will produce a sharp economic slowdown, especially with the record corporate financing gap. Already capital expenditure plans are being cut, lay-offs are rising and new hiring slowing."

Mr Harwood's colleague, Albert Edwards, expanded on this theme. His view is that, price stability having been attained, global markets will have to get used to an "Ice Age" in which equity prices will be driven entirely by earnings.

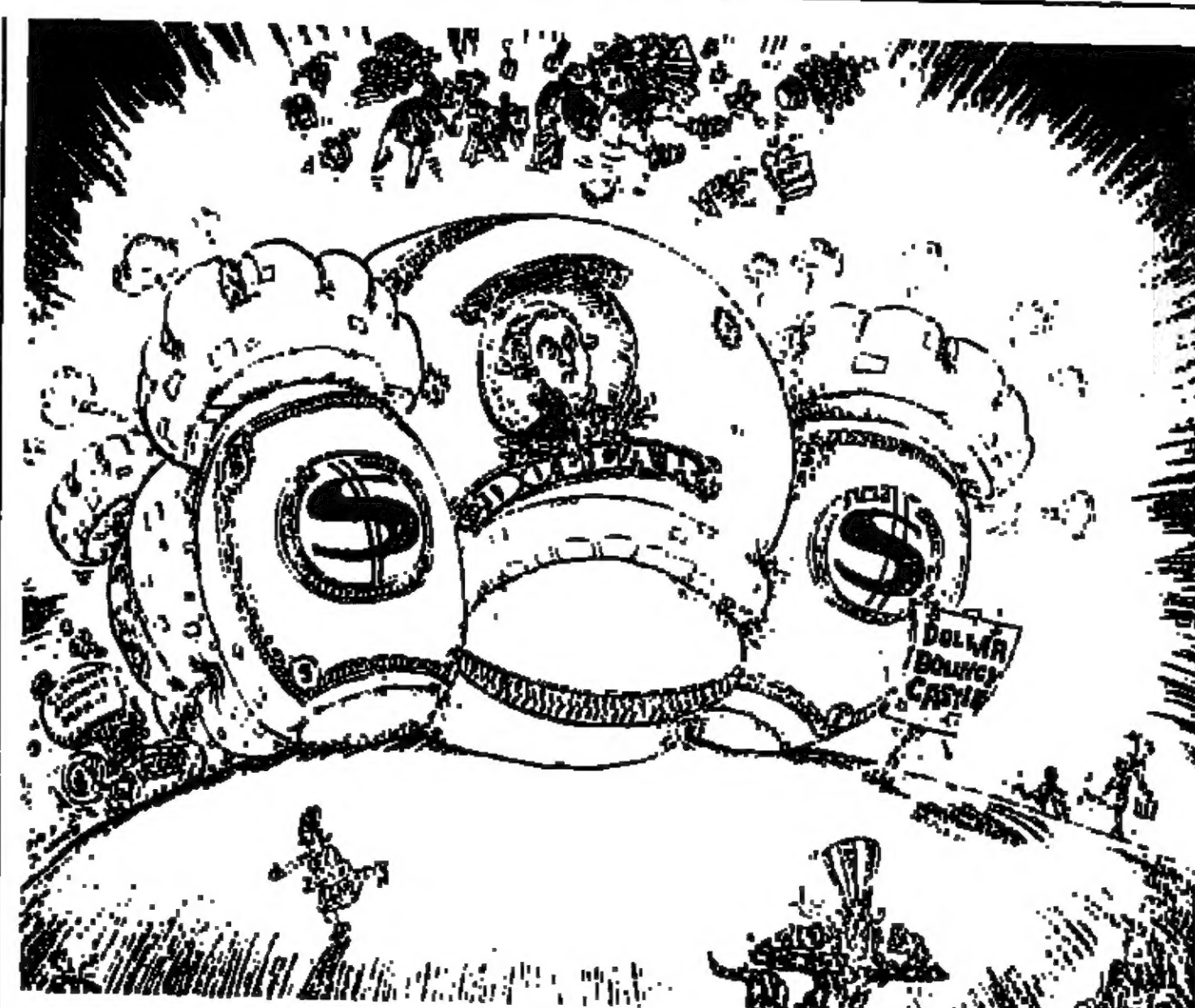
The absurd euphoria surrounding US technology stocks is a classic example of Wall Street's advanced state of denial. According to the analysts who continually badger American citizens to invest in mutual funds, the sky's the limit for these go-go stocks.

When these so-called experts sat down to compile their forecasts for 1998, in October 1997, they were in no doubt. Earnings per share (EPS) would rise by a whopping 32.2 per cent, fully justifying booming share prices.

By February, they were a bit more cautious, but not much. EPS growth was put at 23.2 per cent, a more than respectable performance, particularly in a time of low and falling inflation. In October, reality had intruded on this escapist fantasy. Earnings per share in the technology sector would not actually rise at all in 1998. In fact, EPS would drop by 2.4 per cent.

Any sane person might learn something from this and use the experience of what happened this year as a guide to what may be in store for the technology sector in 1999. Did this happen? Hardly. Whereas this February, analysts saw EPS growth of 26.6 per cent in 1999, by October they have pushed this up to 40 per cent. Such forecasts not only beggar belief, they verge on the criminally negligent.

"We believe the US economic and market conjuncture closely resembles the Asia economic catastrophe



(formerly known as miracle) back in 1996," said Mr Edwards. "Excesses in the US have built up which inevitably will be corrected. The cycle has yet to be abolished. When adjustment does occur, the dollar should be watched closely."

Far from being a "new paradigm," the US bears all the hallmarks of a Mexico or a Thailand, only on a frighteningly colossal scale. For a start, it is running a vast and expanding current account deficit, which is being funded by flows of foreign capital. This hot money is attracted by the rise in US asset prices, which in turn are helping to fund excessive consumption by both businesses and individuals.

AT SOME point, this tail-chasing will stop. For the entire post-war period, the US has had the benefit of sitting on the world's only reserve currency. In less than a month's time that will change with the birth of the euro, and it is a stone-cold certainty that there will be a rebalancing of portfolios by global investors. This is not especially good news for Europe, which has no need of an appreciating currency, but it could prove to be the trigger for a run on the dollar.

From the market's point of view, it could become a one-way bet. A cheaper dollar would make New York an even less attractive place to park hot money. With the US economy dependent on the stock market, there would be pressure on the Federal Reserve to cut rates. All the recent evidence is that its chairman, Alan Greenspan, would be rather quicker to slash rates than the

European Central Bank chiefs. What would be the policy implications of this? Obviously, in the short run, a dollar currency crisis would be utterly disastrous, since it would choke off European exports and do immeasurable damage to the prospects of a Japanese recovery. But in the longer term the global crisis may have to arrive in America's backyard before anything serious is done to reform the world's financial system.

Robert Skidelsky, the biographer of Maynard Keynes, said at a recent Social Market Foundation seminar that in the first era of globalisation, between 1880 and 1914, there were plenty of financial crises, but these were confined to the periphery of the world economy, principally Latin America. The mood changed when the developed world became gripped by economic collapse between the wars.

"Clearly it was the spread of financial instability from the second-class to the first-class powers which spurred the demand for capital controls. For the first time, unlimited capital mobility posed a serious threat to the core countries of the world economy."

"The interesting question is whether the world resembles more closely the world of the 1920s and early 1930s which shaped Keynes's views, or the pre-1914 world when international capital mobility did not give rise to much trouble."

An interesting question indeed. If it really is a pre-1914 world out there, there are enough worrying signs to suggest it may be one last glorious Edwardian summer.

Priests Face Crucifixion in Sudan

Karl Vick in Khartoum

WHEN Pope John Paul II paid a brief, cautious visit here five years ago, he summoned a powerful nuncio for the persecution that Christians often face under Sudan's aggressively Islamic regime, calling it "a particular reproduction of the mystery of Calvary." Now the Sudanese government is bringing the metaphor to life by threatening two Catholic priests with crucifixion.

The Rev. Hillary Boma and the Rev. Lina Tujano are charged with setting off almost a dozen bombs around Khartoum on June 30 in an alleged plot to mark official celebrations marking the anniversary of the 1989 coup that brought the National Islamic Front to power.

If convicted, they and 18 co-defendants could be crucified, under the medieval Islamic code that governs Sudan's legal system.

The priests' trial — actually a court-martial, held at army headquarters and closed to foreign journalists and diplomats — has been denounced by international human rights groups as a charade based on videotaped confessions likely produced under torture. Critics say that what the trial actually lays bare are the fears harbored by the regime.

Sudanese officials insist they have a genuine case, but acknowledge it combines a striking number of the elements viewed as threatening to the government.

The largest Christian denomination in this majority-Muslim nation of 32 million, the Catholic Church has steadily resisted the government's program of forced Islamization. It also has endured the repercussions. Priests report being stopped and interrogated by secret police on an almost monthly basis.

Also routine is the bulldozing — 30

in the past eight years — of sanctuaries and schools by earthmovers guarded by truckloads of Sudanese soldiers.

The church serves mostly people from Sudan's south, a black African, largely Christian region that has been at war with the country's Arab, strongly Muslim north for 15 years. All but two of the priests' 18 co-defendants are southerners who, like an estimated 1.8 million others over the past 15 years, fled the fighting in the rural south and settled near Khartoum.

"They see southern Sudanese as a threat in Khartoum," said Ghazi Sulman, a leading human rights attorney and opposition leader. "They want to give a message to the southerners around Khartoum to leave. I think this is the plan — to displace them from Khartoum."

The timing of the bombings, independent observers say, suggests

the government planned them. The blasts occurred not only on the anniversary of the 1989 coup, but also on the day President Omar Hassan Bashir signed a constitution that apparently opened the door to legal opposition parties, something Sudan has not had since 1989.

The political opening was greeted with widespread skepticism. One day before the devices exploded — in the middle of the night, injuring no one — a National Islamic Front official warned of "terrorist parties." Two days afterward, Bashir cited them in postponing the promised legalization of parties.

"Nobody believes it. It was fabricated by the government," said Nour Hamad, a teacher-turned-taxi driver in Khartoum.

The New York-based monitoring group Human Rights Watch noted that, before charging the priests and southerners, Sudanese security police rounded up 33 others, mostly opposition political figures.

"The timing of the arrests and

statements by high government officials suggests the bombings served as a pretext to stop opposition political parties from reopening inside Sudan," the group said in a statement. The charges against the opposition figures were later dropped, and last week a new law was announced nominally reinstating a multi-party system — albeit one granting a presidentially appointed registrar the power to dissolve any party.

The priests assumed the role of prime suspects on August 1, when security police swept into St. Matthew's Cathedral to arrest Boma, chancellor of the Catholic archdiocese of Khartoum, who was accused of masterminding the plot.

When lawyers were finally permitted to see the suspects, shortly before their trial, all but one reported having been tortured and pleaded not guilty. Jemera Rone, the Human Rights Watch analyst for Sudan, said, "This is typical of what they do with priests."

John Co. 11/16

Irate Jurors Give Notice to Independent Prosecutors

BRI MILLER

THE jurors who last week acquitted former agriculture secretary Mike Espy had sharp words for independent prosecutor Donald C. Smaltz, saying his \$17 million corruption case was an outrageous waste of taxpayers' money and an unfair assault on a man they felt was a motivated, effective leader.

"I hope that we sent a message to these independent counsels," said Juror Anthony Young, a 43-year-old warehouse worker. "We, the American people, don't want any more of these trivial, petty cases. Seventeen million dollars for this? This was a travesty. Mr. Espy could have been one of the greatest agriculture secretaries ever," he continued. "This was the weakest, most bogus thing I ever saw. I can't believe Mr. Smaltz ever brought this to trial."

Although some were more measured in their criticisms, four other jurors echoed Young's views, saying they sat for seven weeks in U.S. District Court waiting for evidence to emerge showing that Espy illegally took gifts from businesses and individuals. But time and again, they said, Smaltz failed to demonstrate that Espy had any criminal intent in taking sports tickets and other items and delivered no proof that Espy bestowed any favors. By the trial's end, some jurors said they were wondering why Espy was forced out of office by the White House in 1994 for what seemed a few errors in judgment.

"I tried to really understand what they were getting at," said Adrienne White-Powell, a 20-year-old office clerk. "I don't think it was until the second or third week that I started to realize that this was a bunch of bull."

White-Powell said she came to view Espy, who took office in 1993 as the nation's first African-American agriculture secretary, as a hard-driven public servant who was "working for the people." Smaltz, meanwhile, seemed to be stretching to make a case.

"He was just the worst," she said. "Even his closing argument — I was like, 'What is your purpose? What are you there for?'"

Smaltz did not return calls to his office seeking his version of the trial. But one of his assistants, William S. Noakes Jr., acknowledged, "If you draw anything from

the jurors' comments, it is that we could have done the case in a clearer, simpler way and done a better job of tying it all up."

Espy was accused of illegally accepting roughly \$35,000 in gifts from companies such as Tyson Foods Inc., Sun-Diamond Growers of California, Quaker Oats Co., and others. Jurors said prosecutors failed to show that Espy took anything "for or because of official acts," a key element to proving he violated gratuities laws. They said many of the items seemed to be given to Espy as acts of friendship.

"I had likened the portrait the prosecution was painting to a 'connect-the-dots' picture," said Diane Clayton-Koontz, 37, a mortgage banker and the jury's foreperson. "[Smaltz] was placing the dots but never connecting them."

She said Smaltz appeared to use tremendous financial resources to bring 38 charges in hopes that one would stick, and contended that more control should be placed on independent counsels. "I can't fault him for pursuing the case with the zeal he pursued it because nobody ever stopped him," she said.

Defense lawyers Ted Wells and Reid H. Weingarten had portrayed Espy as a trail-blazer, noting he was the first African-American elected to Congress in his native Mississippi since Reconstruction and that he then made history at USDA. Two of Smaltz's witnesses described the agriculture department as a racist place.

That kind of testimony deeply concerned Smaltz. During the trial, he protested to Judge Ricardo M. Urbina that the defense was injecting race into the trial in what he saw as an appeal to a mostly black jury. Of the 12 people who ultimately decided the case, all but one was black. Defense lawyers denied playing any race cards, and the judge declined Smaltz's request to advise the jury that race was not an issue in this trial.

"That irritates me — some people are trying to pin some type of bias on this, and that wasn't the case," Clayton-Koontz said. "There was no one in that deliberation room who said, 'I want to acquit him because I feel sorry for him.' ... And his being black was not the issue. Many jurors were very incensed he had gotten himself into this position because of poor judgment."



Censure Is the Best Option

EDITORIAL

THE House impeachment inquiry now winding down had two main purposes. One was to underscore the fact that the president had lied under oath; the other was to establish whether he had gone further and obstructed justice by causing others to give false testimony, withhold evidence, etc.

The first issue, of lying, rests precisely where it did when the proceedings began. The committee Republicans appear determined to send one or more articles of impeachment regarding lying to the floor. That seems right to us. Before the recent mid-term elections, all but five members of the House thought there ought to be an inquiry. Now they should be the judge of the proceeds.

On the issue of whether the president obstructed justice the Judiciary Committee has failed utterly to establish any such thing. The proceedings have been a joke; the only substantive witness has been the independent counsel, whose elaborate conclusions as to obstruction, tampering and the like rest mainly on circumstantial and

other evidence insufficient to remove a president from office. The committee, having developed no additional evidence, should drop the obstruction and related charges, as well as the dangerous notion that the president committed an impeachable offense — abuse of power — by even resisting the independent counsel's inquiries. All those charges are a stretch.

Given then that the only charge against the president that can be upheld is lying, we believe a resolution of censure should accompany any articles of impeachment to the floor. It ought to be tough, unmistakably worded. There ought not to be a way for the president to dispute its meaning or its importance.

Censure is not an ideal answer to this tangle. In some ways it is too weak a response to the president's offense, and we come to it with reservations.

But the arguments against impeachment are compelling. It would be enormously disruptive. The Senate would be unlikely to convict. The president has only two years left in his term, and impeachment would consume much of the first, prolonging this miserable matter for another year.

Mr. Clinton is flawed; he was also re-elected, and it is no small thing to reverse a national election result. The case arose from personal behavior, which to some degree was used by the president's ideological enemies in an effort to bring him down. It weakens the country if a president can be dislodged too easily. No matter that he could have avoided all the harm, prevented the entire occurrence, had he simply chosen to say forthrightly yes instead of no, told the truth instead of thinking he could once more duck it.

Some Republicans want to deny the House a chance to vote on censure. They think the case for impeachment will be strengthened if they deny members an alternative. It's the wrong way to conduct these proceedings: this is one issue on which the House ought not to be cornered. It ought to be free to get to the result it wants.

Tough censure is not the perfect outcome. There isn't a perfect outcome here. But on the basis of the evidence as assembled by the independent counsel and committee, we grudgingly conclude that censure beats impeachment. We hope the House does the same.

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Size Matters, Say Oil Giants

Steven Murfson

PETROLEUM geologists have trekked to the frozen Arctic, the blazing Arabian deserts, the jungles of South America and the hurricane-prone waters of the Gulf of Mexico in search of what they call "elephants," the giant oil reservoirs that can become money mines for big oil companies.

But last week Exxon Corp. found an elephant in a less harsh environment: the board room of Mobil Corp. For a price of \$81 billion in Exxon stock and assumed debt, Exxon obtained 4.1 billion barrels of crude oil reserves, almost as much again in natural gas reserves, and an array of oil refineries, gasoline stations and chemical businesses.

With that stroke, it created the world's largest company and gave new meaning to the phrase "Big Oil," which critics often use to describe the oil giant firms. The combined Exxon-Mobil will have crude oil production that outstrips Nigeria or any one of several other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Its revenue will be bigger than the gross domestic product of all but 23 countries. It will be the world's largest retailer of gasoline, with about 47,500 stations. And it will have a profit of nearly \$12 billion.

Despite the huge size of the new company, Exxon and Mobil executives say the goal of the merger is self-preservation rather than domination. Engulfed by a slump in oil prices, faced with the ever-present pressure to replace oil reserves, and confronted by recent mergers among their rivals, the two giants say they can better compete together than separately.

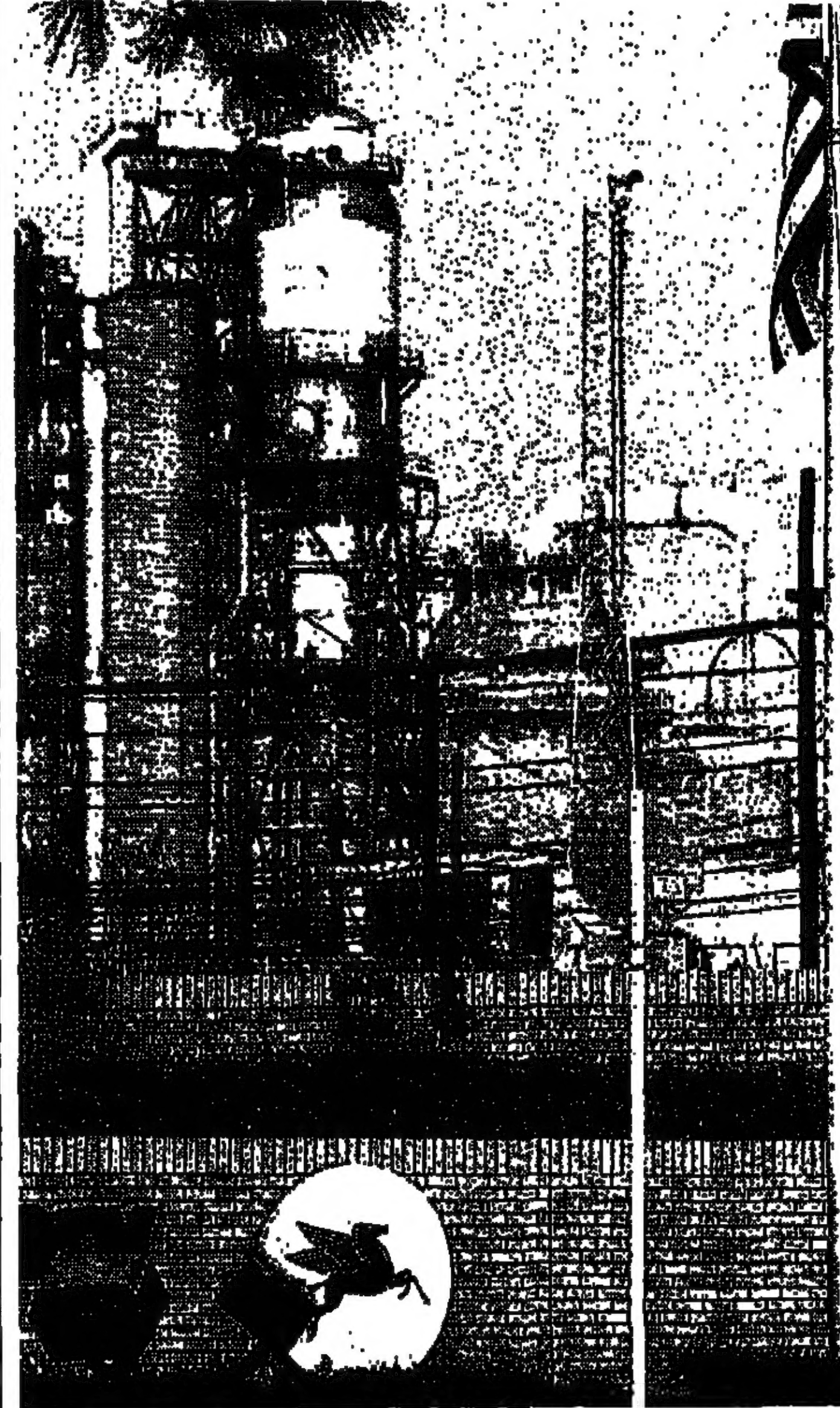
The combination of Exxon and Mobil establishes a top tier in the oil industry, which is already dominated by expanding giants like British Petroleum (which is in the midst of buying Amoco) and the Royal Dutch/Shell Group, which recently merged its U.S. marketing operations with Texaco Inc. Analysts say the Exxon-Mobil merger will only speed the oil industry's trend from big to behemoth.

"We'll come out of this with three, four or five big private companies and a bunch of state oil companies," said Philip Verleger, an oil industry consultant with Boston's Brattle Group. "If you want a paradigm, look at the airline industry; we saw 30 or so private companies contract into four or five and a few national carriers."

Some industry critics fear the emergence of the new leviathans will mean higher prices for consumers by reducing competition in gasoline retailing. They say studies show that prices are significantly higher in places like San Diego, where there are fewer gasoline retailers, than in Los Angeles, where there are more.

Exxon-Mobil combined would have a 16.8 percent share of the U.S. gasoline market, according to the Petroleum Finance Co., a consulting firm. Moreover, the three biggest firms — BP-Amoco, Shell-Texaco, and Exxon-Mobil — would dominate the American gasoline retailing market with a 38 percent share. Because they usually focus on certain areas, the share could be larger in certain places. Mobil has a 9 percent national market share, but it only markets gasoline in 28 states.

But oil executives and many analysts argue that the current consoli-



Mobil: Now part of the world's largest company

PHOTO: PAT SULLIVAN

dation is driven by survival, making the oil industry perhaps the richest industry ever to cry poor.

Oil prices, when adjusted for inflation, are at their lowest level since the Great Depression, says Daniel Yergin, author of *The Prize*, a history of the oil industry. The balance between supply and demand has

been turned on its head. Asia's economic slump, Iraq's partial return to oil markets, increased supplies from west Africa, and increased natural gas usage has knocked the bottom out of the oil market. That has squeezed profit margins at the big oil companies despite technology-driven reductions in costs.

In addition to adult deaths from

AIDS Threatens to Wipe Out 50 Years of Progress

Lester R. Brown

WHEN United Nations demographers released their global population projections last October, they shocked the world. The projections were substantially lower, partly because of AIDS' devastating toll. The massive rise in deaths now predicted in many countries marks a tragic new development in world demography.

These projections are the first to use the World Health Organization's new data on HIV infection rates: in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, a staggering one-fifth to one-fourth of the adult population is HIV-positive. In Zimbabwe, it is 26 percent; Botswana 25 percent; and in Namibia, Swaziland and Zambia it is 18 to 20 percent.

Barring a medical miracle, these countries will lose one-fifth or more of their adult population to AIDS within the next decade. To find a precedent, we must go back to the 16th century, when smallpox decimated New World Indians, or to the 14th century, when roughly a third of Europe's population died of bubonic plague.

Industrial countries have been able to hold HIV infection rates among the adult population under 1 percent, but rates are soaring in developing countries, where governments often cannot muster the leadership energy and fiscal resources to cope.

Social problems routinely managed in industrial societies are becoming full-scale humanitarian crises in many developing ones. As a result, some of the latter are now headed for population stability or even decline in a matter of years, not because of falling birthrates but because of fast-rising death rates. Rising AIDS fatalities could bring Zimbabwe's population growth to a halt as early as 2002. Life expectancy in Botswana is projected to drop from the historic high of 61 years in 1990 to 41 years in 2000.

In addition to adult deaths from

AIDS, some 30 percent of infants of HIV-positive mothers are born with the virus; their life expectancy is two years. The epidemic is also creating a new population subset — AIDS orphans, already numbering 7.8 million in sub-Saharan Africa.

The epidemic's social and economic effects are just starting to materialize. Unlike most potentially fatal infectious diseases, AIDS takes its toll not so much among the very young and the elderly but among young professionals — the very engineers, agronomists and teachers needed to develop the economy. Indeed, the precipitous drop in life expectancy, the sentinel indicator of economic development, could erase half a century of progress almost overnight. (See "Beyond Malthus" at www.worldwatch.com.)

Two lessons need to be learned. One, the key to control is attacking the disease early before it spirals out of control; and two, population growth must be slowed before demographic fatigue overwhelms even more governments.

Thailand and Uganda, where the epidemic was treated as an emergency, successfully curbed the virus' spread through an intense educational effort and the free distribution of condoms.

Family planning programs and condom distribution are keys to controlling the spread of infection. But just days before the U.N. projections were released, a little-noticed amendment — inserted into the budget at the last minute by the U.S. congressional leadership — cut off all funding for the U.N. Population Fund, the chief source of international family planning assistance. Congress, mired in the quicksand of anti-abortion politics, is depriving developing countries of the help they need.

The HIV epidemic should be seen for what it is: an emergency of epic proportions that could claim more lives early in the next century than World War II did. Any decision to withhold assistance in controlling it should not be taken lightly.

Quebec Sends Ambiguous Messages to Rest of Canada

OPINION

E.J. Dionne Jr.

CANADIANS are engaged in one of the most remarkable experiments ever undertaken by a democracy: a peaceful, nearly three-decade-old debate over whether their country should continue to exist.

Quebec's voters made sure the issue will remain unresolved for a while longer. In their recent provincial elections, they gave a clear majority of legislative seats to the separatist Parti Quebecois, and gave a narrow plurality of the popular vote to the anti-separatist Liberal Party.

By winning a majority of seats (because much of the Liberal vote was concentrated in predominately

English-speaking districts), the party of separatist Premier Lucien Bouchard will continue to run Quebec's government. But the results provided no mandate for the separation Bouchard seeks.

If the voters sent any message, it was one of ambiguity and ambivalence, exactly what Quebecers seem to feel toward their status within Canada. And Bouchard played on that ambiguity brilliantly. In theory, he supported yet a third referendum on Quebec's sovereignty. But he made it clear he would only call a referendum if he sensed "winning conditions." In other words, you could vote for him whether you wanted a referendum or not.

His campaign slogan — "Pas confiance" or "I have confidence" — was equally brilliant in its ambiguity.

It could mean simple confidence in Bouchard's government, which, despite unpopular health care cuts (Bouchard apologized for them), stands well with Quebec's voters. But it also touched a psychological chord among French-speaking Quebecers: that they have confidence in themselves to go it alone if they must.

For federalists — those who want Quebec to stay in Canada — the results were both a disappointment and a relief. They rallied behind Jean Charest, the leader of the Quebec Liberals, because it was thought that if anyone could stem the separatist tide, it was Charest.

But he was out-campaigned by Bouchard, and he made the mistake of pledging to reduce government involvement in Quebec's economy — a bad move in this pro-government

province. Yet Charest still did far better than the polls had predicted.

My forebears came to the United States from Quebec, French is my first language, and I spent some childhood summers there. So, I suspect, my attitudes on these matters are close to those of many Quebecers.

Quebec is culturally distinct from the rest of Canada and should be recognized as such. It would be a good country if it chose to become one. But it's also true that Canada is a fine and decent country, and its breakup would be a great loss.

Understand that ambiguity, and you understand why Quebecers keep pushing for separation, yet keep pulling away from the final act. The rest of Canada is tired of the fight. It's time to pull away from the obsession," wrote Catherine Ford of the Calgary Herald, in a column

reprinted in the National Post. "It is easy to focus on the 'Quebec problem' because the lines of this play are well-rehearsed."

Worse for Canada, every new discussion about granting Quebec more powers distorts the national debate. Whatever powers Quebec wants, some of the other provincial governments want too, as Ford points out. New negotiations are about to begin on giving the provinces more power over social service programs.

Devolution in these matters may or may not be a good idea. But this sort of devolution is not what motivates separatist sentiment in Quebec. It's rooted in culture, language and distinctiveness, not in funding formulas.

Canada and Quebec need to settle the fundamental question: Is the rest of Canada willing to give formal recognition to Quebec's distinctiveness within the federation? And is Quebec willing to settle for that?

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Shop Till You Drop

Jonathan Yardley

IN SAM WE TRUST
The Untold Story of Sam Walton
And How Wal-Mart Is Devouring
America
By Bob Ortega
Times Books, 413pp, \$25.95

FOR six years Bob Ortega has covered Wal-Mart for the Wall Street Journal, a publication one would expect to be sympathetic to that paradigmatic example of American capitalism at its most efficient and successful, but his own slant is made abundantly clear by the title and subtitle of this book. Though Ortega finds much to admire in Wal-Mart and its late founder, Sam Walton, he is deeply skeptical about the paternalistic culture Walton constructed and about the many ways Wal-Mart has imprudently upon, and altered, the American landscape.

There is nothing new about any of this. Wal-Mart bashing is almost as old as Wal-Mart itself, i.e., three-and-a-half decades and counting. All its real and imagined sins — selling goods made by child labor in Third World countries, passing off imported goods as American-made, selling products smuggled from China and, most particularly, despoiling the countryside and running innocent small entrepreneurs out of business — have been hashed over, and over, and over.

If anything, in telling how Wal-Mart rose from inauspicious beginnings in an Arkansas hamlet called Bentonville to become king of the retailing jungle, with 3,400 stores and 728,000 employees, Ortega inadvertently suggests that he may

have written the wrong book. Success stories are, if not exactly a dime a dozen, sufficiently commonplace to make his recitation of Sam Walton's various magic formulas seem just another page out of the annals of capitalism triumphant. Rather, the really interesting tale is that of Kmart, which when Walton opened his first store was miles ahead of everyone else yet fell, within a quarter-century, so far behind Wal-Mart as to be almost invisible.

As Ortega demonstrates in what are far and away the most revealing and interesting sections of *In Sam We Trust*, Kmart was done in not merely by Wal-Mart's vigorous and ingenious competition but by its own complacency, stupidity and ineptitude. Like Wal-Mart, Kmart was essentially the brainchild of a single inspired, obsessed man — this one's name was Harry Cunningham — who shaped the firm to suit the images in his mind and ran it brilliantly until his retirement. After that it fell into the hands of a succession of corporate bureaucrats. Many of these were timid and self-protective; almost none of them had the slightest grasp of the rapid changes that were occurring in the American marketplace and in technology that by the late 1960s was beginning to make it possible to track inventory instantaneously and to distribute replacement goods with similar dispatch.

Kmart was set up to serve the suburbs and the automobile that had created them while Wal-Mart catered to the small towns that national corporations thought unworthy of their attentions. But both were in the same business — discount retailing — and both, by the



time Wal-Mart had emerged as serious competition, had ample resources on which to draw. But while Wal-Mart stayed lean and alert to the needs and tastes of its customers — Walton, like the ruler of the queen's nave, polished up the handle on the big front door, or made sure someone else did — Kmart slid into shabbiness and "relaxed into complacency about its assortment of merchandise." It is hard to imagine a more self-incriminatory comment than the one made by its would-be savior, Joe Antonini, who said, "It's depressing to visit an old store, even if I must say so." Well, it was depressing to shop at one, too, which is why millions of Americans stopped.

Instead they went to Wal-Mart, which saw its opportunity and moved into the suburbs once ruled by Kmart. Founded on seemingly simple principles — "Offer the lowest possible price. Be bigger.

Keep your costs lower. Make any other considerations secondary" — which demanded eternal vigilance, Wal-Mart was an astonishingly efficient machine against which Kmart, with "its antiquated system of having managers at each of the company's 673 stores fill out order books by hand and mail in each day's invoices to headquarters," was dead meat. In 1987, when Antonini took over Kmart, "it held 35 percent of the discount retail market; Wal-Mart held 20 percent. Seven years later, when he left, Kmart held 23 percent; Wal-Mart, 42 percent."

This is the meat of Ortega's story, and he tells it well. The rest of it may interest people who are trying to fabricate businesses of their own, for the Wal-Mart example is tempting and perhaps instructive, though absent the particular, peculiar genius of Sam Walton, none of them is likely to succeed. Nothing is forever. Not even Wal-Mart.

Paperbacks

The Blues: From Robert Johnson To Robert Cray, by Tony Russell (Schirmer, \$18)

"I'M THE only man in the world that plays the accordion upside-down," the late Rockin' Dopsy (pronounced "Doopsy") once declared. "It's all because daddy didn't taught me how to play. I just picked it up." The left-handed accordionist is one of many lesser-known blues masters included in Tony Russell's extensive, photo-rich book. The immortals — B.B. King, Muddy Waters, et al. — are here as well. Russell has fashioned his book as a user's guide for both aficionados and newcomers to the blues. He writes in his introduction, "The blues has been to convey the sweep of blues history from Los Angeles to London and from Papa Charlie Jackson to Stevie Ray Vaughan, duly noting the great and good but not tilting the balance too much in favour of the dead."

Shaking a Leg: Collected Writings, by Angela Carter (Penguin, \$15.95)

IT'S BEEN said that Angela Carter — magic realist, feminist, iconoclast — has become the most popular dissertation subject in Great Britain. Carter would have smiled at that, for she was the least academic of writers, being brilliantly unworldly, widely traveled and deeply English. Certainly her revisionist fairy tales, collected in *The Bloody Chamber* and other books, can be shocking, but novels like *Nights at the Circus* and *Wise Children* might easily be called charming, in all senses of the word. Since Carter's early death from cancer, Viking and Penguin have published her collected stories, and that essential volume is now followed by this gathering of Carter's book reviews, essays and articles. Sex, human, clothes, food, work, art, Sade, movies, America, Borges, animals — the range of her interests is quite dazzling. She is the voice of an entire generation.

Chat -!, Connect !-!, and Crash !-, all by Nan McCarthy (Pocket, \$6 each)

NAN McCarthy's trilogy tracing the romantic adventures of Ber and Max began as a single self-published novel and grew into a series that has attracted a cult of cyber-savvy fans. Brev, a hard-charging book editor, and Max, a restless ad copywriter, first meet online, and the results aren't promising: "I wasn't trying to pick you up," Max protests. "I don't do cybersex, and you could be a real toad for all I know." Brev retorts: "I am not a toad for your information. You, on the other hand, are probably wearing a smelly jogging suit with your butt hanging out the back and Cheetos crumbs hanging off your beard. But when they meet at a Macworld confab their mingling is electric. The two become lovers who must decide if they want to spend the rest of their lives together. "I think you've known from the beginning that I fell in love with you the first night we met," Max tells Brev. "In fact I think I had begun to fall in love with cyberspace before I had love with the real you, eyes actually met the real you, and though I didn't know at the time that the cyberspace 'is' the real you, each volume includes a glossary of abbreviations, acronyms, and emoticons to assist readers not fluent in cyberspeak."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Christmas comes to Cuba

Jean-Michel Caroit
in Santo Domingo

THE Castro regime has made yet another gesture towards the Catholic church by reinstating Christmas as a public holiday in the Cuban calendar. From 1969 on, December 25 was regarded as a day like any other. Then in 1997 it was declared a one-off public holiday so preparations could be made for the Pope's visit to Cuba in January. But now the politburo of the Cuban Communist party (CCP) has declared that, "from this year on, every December 25 will be regarded as a public holiday."

In a "declaration" of more than 2,000 words published on the front page of Granma, the official CCP organ, the politburo wrote: "Despite imperialism's efforts to exploit religious sentiments for counter-revolutionary purposes, an anti-religious spirit has never been a feature of the Cuban revolution."

Cuba's leaders explained that the "suspension" of Christmas in 1969 had been motivated by the need to mobilise hundreds of thousands of workers in order to achieve the target of 10 million tonnes that their commander-in-chief, Fidel Castro, had set for that year's sugar harvest. "In a tropical country like Cuba, December is a cool, dry month suitable for farm work, which is not the case in northern countries, because they are covered in snow at that time of year."

They explained that today, as a result of mechanisation, the sugar harvest no longer requires so much manpower. In December. The reinstatement of Christmas was "a mark of consideration and respect for the most wholesome feelings and wishes of many of our fellow citizens," and well worth "the sacrifice of tens of millions of pesos in wages and in unprovided goods and services."

The politburo reminded readers that "Cuba's Socialist constitution,

Le Monde

Jospin faces a dismal winter

Jean-Michel Apathie and
Michel Noblecourt

ANSWERING a parliamentary question on December 2, the French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, gave MPs the following piece of advice: "When you come up against a problem, gentlemen, you can deal with it in two ways: either you can say: 'I am up-right in my boots' — a reference to the phrase used in July 1995 by the beleaguered Alain Juppé, who was then prime minister — 'or you can choose to adjust to the situation and say: 'I am flexible in my trainers'."

Flexibility is a quality Jospin will need if he is to negotiate the increasing number of obstacles in his way. On December 2, during the prime minister's customary informal conversation with the president before the cabinet meeting, Jacques Chirac told Jospin that he would refuse to call a congress (a meeting of deputies and senators empowered to adopt the justice reform bill) until the government had put the full text of the bill before parliament.

Chirac maintained that, unless the full implications of the legislative reform were revealed to deputies and senators, they might abstain, thus jeopardising the three-fifths majority the reform needs to go through. The government, which is determined not to change its parliamentary agenda, responded angrily. The justice minister, Elisabeth Guigou, accused Chirac of trying to cover up divisions on the justice reform issue within the opposition parties, the neo-Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) and the centrist Union pour la Démocratie Française (UDF). And she claimed that Chirac had already "agreed to the overall reform of the law."

She then asked the opposition whether they would "dare to continue to oppose a reform that has the backing of the president and the government." At this point, Jospin intervened: "The justice minister simply highlighted a rather cruel contradiction. It is the opposition that is opposing a bill which the president, on the basis of a government proposal, said he approved of."



Race for the presidency in 2002... 'I am flexible in my trainers!'

On the issue of the reform of the broadcasting system, problems came up when it was announced that the bill proposed by the culture minister, Catherine Trautmann, was to be postponed. Daniel Vallant, government spokesman and minister for relations with parliament, said the reforms were necessary, but he refused to say when the bill, which was supposed to be debated on December 15, would come before parliament. He simply asked for "time". Jospin's pluralist coalition should be able to use that time-lag to settle its internal disagreements about the bill.

Another problem has been the endless wrangling over the government's proposed reform, known as Pacts, that would enable unmarried couples, including homosexuals, to enjoy the same benefits as married people. After its first article was adopted, the first reading of the Pacts bill was postponed until December 8, with four articles and 100 amendments still to be debated. All these problems have surfaced

Dumas blames his legal troubles on the press

EDITORIAL

IS ROLAND Dumas really the victim of a press conspiracy? The president of the Constitutional Council — who was also a former foreign minister under President François Mitterrand — recently accused the press of subjecting him to a "campaign of denigration", which had "more to do with a personal vendetta than with any actual court case". Some of our readers agree, and have suggested that *Le Monde* actually masterminded a campaign against Dumas.

In a democracy, a free and independent press should not resort to self-censorship in an attempt to avoid stepping on people's toes. Its job is to inform, even at the risk of challenging its readers' mindsets and loyalties. It must continually strike a balance between the public's right to know and an individual's right to privacy.

Dumas has been charged in connection with a corruption case. *Le Monde* has regularly reported on new developments in the investigations into that case, as it has always done with any sensitive case that might have implications for French public life. Whether those investigations concern right-wing politicians like the mayor of Paris, Jean Tiberi, or left-wingers like Dumas, our approach has always been the same: to report on the investigating magistrates' work accurately and rigorously, to give the defence's side of the case, and to respect the rule that a person is presumed innocent until proved guilty.

Dumas knows that full well. He agreed to see us on several occasions from the end of 1997 until the beginning of 1998; he regularly answered our telephone calls until last summer; and we have always offered him the opportunity to state his case

in the columns of *Le Monde* in whatever form he chooses. But in the past few weeks the Dumas affair has become more than a mere legal issue. The publication of La Putain de la République (The Republic's Whore) by Dumas's former lover, Christine Deviers-Joncour, has brought into the public arena a question that is no longer about the presumption of innocence, but about the respectability of a crucial French institution: the Constitutional Council.

The council is the very keystone of our democratic edifice. According to the constitution, it is a body which ensures that the president of the republic, and its deputies and senators, are fairly elected, and that election campaign funding is above board. No appeal can be lodged against the council's rulings, which have to be obeyed by the government and all administrative and jurisdictional authorities.

Moreover, during the council's secret deliberations, its president has the casting vote. In other words, Dumas holds the only body that can call into question or cancel universal suffrage. Such undivided power carries obligations with it. In so far as he represents an institution whose high repute presupposes that it is unimpeachable, he must himself be unimpeachable. Yet on his own admission Dumas failed to declare to the tax authorities sums which he describes as "trifling", but which were in fact substantial.

In other words, he saw no need to comply with the legal obligations incumbent on any citizen. That element alone of the Dumas affair should be enough to justify his resignation. If not, neither the Constitutional Council nor those who sit on it will in future enjoy the authority that their weighty responsibilities require.

(November 28)

All the World's His Stage

John F. Andrews

SHAKESPEARE
The Invention of the Human
By Harold Bloom
Riverhead Books, 745pp, \$35

DURING a recent conference, a critic best known for his annotated edition of Shakespeare's Sonnets (1977) opened a witty address with the arresting assertion that Shakespeare is history's most underrated poet. Illustrating his remarks with examples of the dramatist's astonishing verbal ingenuity, Stephen Booth then proceeded to show that, notwithstanding the veneration our greatest playwright has enjoyed over the four centuries of his largely uncontested domination of the literary and dramatic pantheon, he's even more brilliant than we've always considered him to be. That, no doubt, is why he continues to delight new generations of readers and audiences with marvels that previous admirers have failed to register.

Now comes Harold Bloom, the Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale University, with an even bolder proposition: that "Shakespeare, by inventing what has become the most accepted mode for representing character and personality in language, thereby invented the human as we know it."

According to Bloom, "Shakespeare is the original psychologist, and Freud the belated historian." Through characters such as Hamlet, who "has made us skeptics in

our relationships," and Falstaff, who instructs us in "a comprehensiveness of humor that avoids unnecessary cruelty," and Cleopatra, "archetype of the star, the world's first celebrity," and the woman "through whom the playwright taught us how complex eros is," we've acquired many of the insights that guide us in a ceaseless quest to comprehend our myriad natures. Without Shakespeare, if Bloom is to be believed, "our ideas would be different, particularly our ideas of the human, since they were, more

The pleasure this affords comes at the price of a regrettable accumulation of exasperation

often than not, Shakespeare's ideas before they were ours."

Bloom is a formidable presence, with more than 20 books and a panoply of laurels to his credit. Over the last decade he has emerged as a pivotal figure in the culture wars and in 1994 *The Western Canon* became a bestseller.

According to Shakespeare: The Invention Of The Human, the author who "Already was the Western canon" — or at least the author who had long been the anchor who secured a received core of fundamental classics and thereby helped

stabilize a measure of spiritual and philosophical coherence — "is now becoming central to the world's implicit canon." That, says Harold Bloom, is because "Shakespeare's influence, overwhelming on literature, has been even larger on life." It "surpasses the effect" of such Greek masterpieces as the works of Homer and Plato, and it "challenges the scriptures of West and East alike" in its impression upon "the modification of human character and personality." And why? Because "here at last we encounter an intelligence without limits. As we read Shakespeare, we are always engaged in catching up, and our joy is that the process is never-ending; he is still out ahead of us."

Bloom has no patience for today's contextualizing "reductionists." He's persuaded that they tend to "mistake the truth totally," and he therefore dismissively consigns all avant-garde directors, among them the widely acclaimed Peter Brook, and the majority of his academic coevals to what Bloom labels "the School of Resentment," a cacophonous loony bin for Shakespeare-envying "Marxists, multiculturalists, feminists, [and] nouveau historicists" who diminish the playwright to whatever the practitioner of a given "ism" is seeking to isolate in a text that has been commandeered for less than noble purposes.

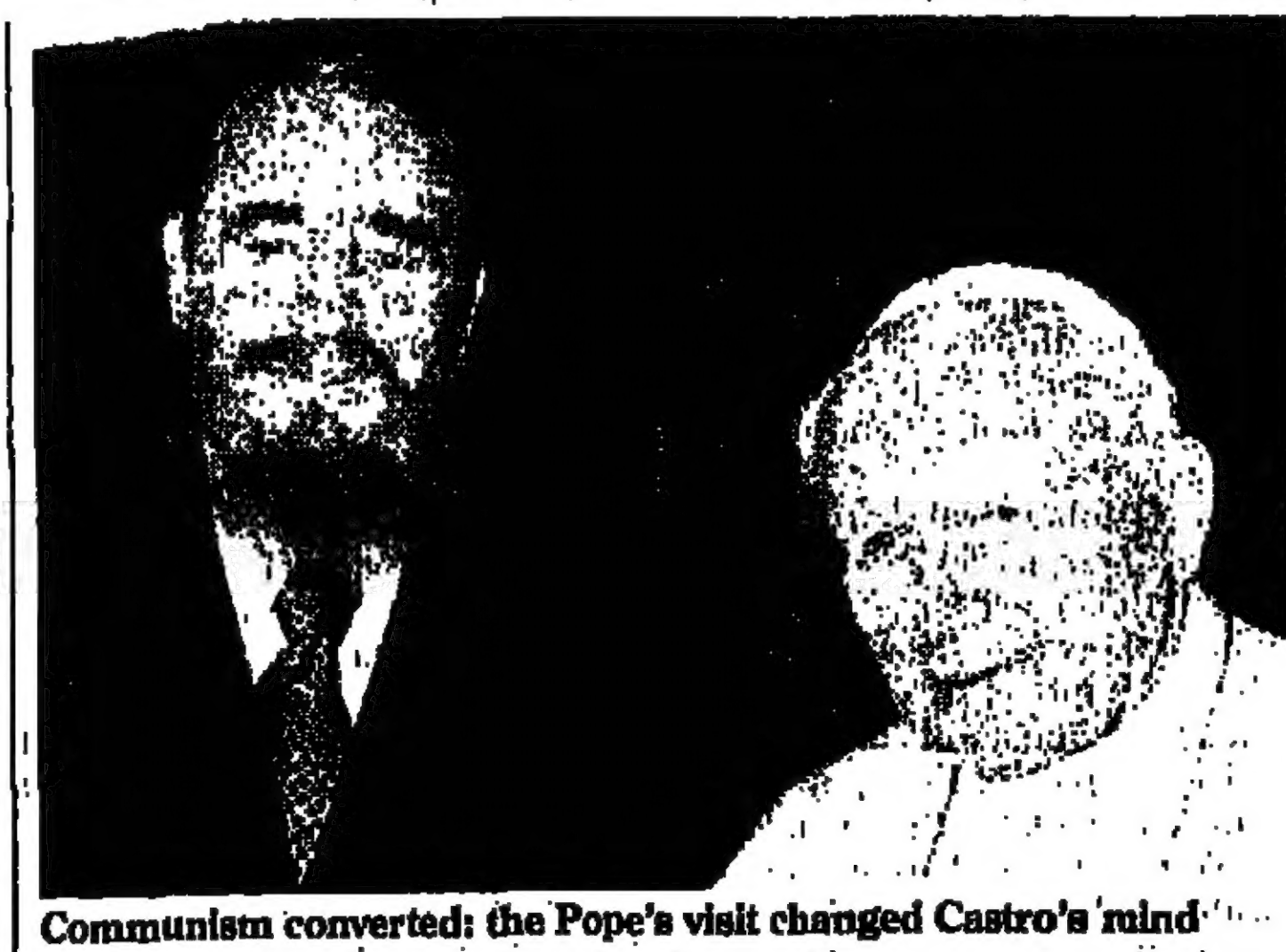
Harold Bloom seems to be in sympathy with few of his contemporaries, and one comes away from his latest book with the sense that he would much rather engage in

putative discourse with such exalted predecessors as Samuel Johnson, William Hazlitt, A.C. Bradley, W.H. Auden and G. Wilson Knight than to bother attending conscientiously to anything he might experience in the books, articles, films, theater and television productions of most of his younger colleagues.

They, in turn, will probably feel little incentive to bestow much credence upon the deliberations of an eminence grise who treats them with undisguised contempt. He and his publisher will be taken to task for their neglect to supply such minimal courtesies as an index, a set of footnote citations, and a bibliographical listing of the small cadre of current professionals whom Bloom deigns to single out by name.

More importantly, Bloom will be reminded that there is a crucial distinction between a random assortment of insufficiently supported generalizations — a number of them so eloquent and memorable as to rise to the level of aphorism, but far too many of them in an Olympian tone that might have struck John Keats as a travesty of the quality he once defined as the "egotistical sublime" — and a responsible attempt to assemble and organize enough pertinent material to prove that a grand but problematic hypothesis is founded upon anything more substantial than its author's often dazzling but occasionally quirky connoisseurship.

This could have been an important contribution to our appreciation of a significant heritage. Unfortunately I fear that the pleasure it affords most readers will come at the price of a regrettable accumulation of exasperation.



Communism converted: the Pope's visit changed Castro's mind

which was approved by 97.7 percent of voters in 1976 and given a facelift in 1992, guarantees religious freedom." It did admit, though, that the exclusion of believers from the ranks of the CCP during the early years of the revolution "had undoubtedly been discriminatory."

Times have certainly changed. Castroist leaders now stress the similarities between Christian values and their own struggle in favour of a "lasting and truly solidarity-inspired form of globalisation." As an example of that revolutionary solidarity, which has much in common with

Christian charity, they mentioned the fact that Cuba recently sent 2,000 doctors to Central American countries devastated by Hurricane Mitch.

Christian morality is now regarded by the Cuban regime as a bulwark against declining values and mounting delinquency. In an article published recently by the Catholic journal, *Aqui es Iglesia*, Cardinal Jaime Ortega expressed concern at the large number of "calculus crimes." "Drugs have surreptitiously appeared on the scene" in the wake of prostitution and the rising burglary rate.

The authorities recognise that the opening up of Cuba to mass tourism and the partial dollarisation of the economy are phenomena that carry a "social cost." They have tried to cope with the problem by both cracking down on lawbreakers and organising campaigns of "ideological purity." In the politburo's view, "a day of rest and family reunion" at Christmas will also contribute to "the unity of the people" and a strengthening of values. (December 3)

الدين في الحياة

Letter that broke the spirit of a man down on his luck

Jean-Paul Besset

ROBERT was 38 and determined to get back on his feet. After he had spent years roughing it, there was a glimmer of hope: he had got on a training course, found himself a little bedsit and registered for income support. But then on November 1 he got letter No 728001 from the Toulouse social services: "We granted you an advance of 1,069 francs [£190] on your income support for September 1998 in the expectation of receiving your statement of income. We have not yet received it. . . You therefore owe us 1,069 francs, which should be repaid as soon as possible."

Eleven days later, Robert killed himself. In his suicide note, he wrote: "I've had enough. I did everything I could to get out of this mess, but this has really done me in."

He left 71 handwritten pages on which he had scrawled his thoughts: "This story is part of the lives of all of us. Every day I get up, look for work, and find nothing. But I tell myself that tomorrow could be my lucky day."

Robert was hardly born into the lap of luxury, but his childhood was almost "normal": "We got more or less all the little treats we wanted." The problems started when his father became disabled and his epileptic mother was made redundant. At the age of 16 Robert got a job as a factory worker. He went through a bad patch after falling ill, but recovered and got taken on by a building firm. Eight years later the firm went bust and his father died. He found himself out of a job and on his own with his virtually bedridden mother.

"I admit I ran away from it all. I literally left my mother in the lurch. I started on the road that led to me becoming homeless."

Robert began to drift. He got odd jobs, but mostly he was unemployed. He took to drink. He felt "so pathetic" with his trembling hands that he cut off all contact with his relatives. "I was so ashamed I rubbed out all traces of myself." He ended up in Toulouse, where he managed to get on income support. "I used to blow it all and then go begging . . . to buy booze and cigarettes."

A ray of sunshine came into Robert's life in 1997, when he met a priest, Bernard Berthuit, who used to invite the homeless for a cup of coffee at his presbytery in the Saint-Cyprien district of Toulouse. It was there that Robert met Monika: "She was tall and slim — I don't need to tell you more about her." He called her "my little angel". He stopped drinking, went on a building training course and began seeing his relatives again. He managed to get back on income support in 1998 and moved into a tiny bedsit. Every day he went out looking for a job but with no luck. Then he got letter No 728001 from the social services. It probably so depressed him he did not note its final sentence: "If you have a problem, don't hesitate to get in touch with us."

(November 28)

Life is the pits for Russian coal miners

François Bonnet in Vorkuta

VORKUTA is a remote Russian mining town of 180,000 inhabitants that lies 200km north of the Arctic Circle, at the point where the Urals give way to expanses of tundra. For nine months of the year it is a snowbound place where the whiteness contrasts with the towering plumes of black smoke that rise from its power stations and smouldering slag heaps.

"Without our coal mines, this place would be dead," says Vorkuta's mayor, Igor Slepukhin. Vladimir Shushkov, director of the Severnyy mine, agrees: "If the mines closed, we'd have to evacuate everyone."

Vorkuta is not so much a town as a sprawling and dilapidated industrial zone. It produces some of the highest-grade coal in Russia. There are no roads to Vorkuta: its only link with the rest of Russia is one plane a day and a railway line that brings in food and takes out coal.

"When I started here as a miner in 1958, Vorkuta seemed an impossible place to live in," says 61-year-old Sergei Smirnovsky. "In January and February the temperature can plunge to -50C. In those days there were still camps around the pits. We worked in the mines with former zeks [gulag prisoners] who had been freed in 1953 or 1956 but were not allowed to leave Vorkuta."

From 1931 on, Vorkuta was one of Stalin's largest and grimmest gulags. Hundreds of thousands of prisoners died there. "They say there's a zek under every railway sleeper," Smirnovsky says.

But although still haunted by the spectre of the gulag, Vorkuta's 32,000 miners cherish another vivid memory — that of a pioneering city which played a heroic part in the construction of socialism and became a kind of eldorado for the working-class elite that was treated so well during the Brezhnev years.

The imposing Miners' Palace, with its frescoes celebrating the worker setting off to hew coal, and bas-reliefs of Lenin pointing the way to the pithead, still has a certain majesty. "We used to have everything — flowers, grapes, Georgian wine," says Viktor, who came to Vorkuta in 1981.

It was partly because many miners could still remember that lost golden age that they decided, after putting up with pay arrears going back to November 1997, to block several railway lines in the

Urals last May and to camp in front of the White House in Moscow from June to October.

"Come on, you chaps. We may be in a mess now, but things should be better in two years, don't you think?" quips Liliya Ivanovna, who for the past 15 years has been in charge of the technicians' and managers' changing rooms at the Severnyy mine, 20km out of town. Liliya puts away the working clothes of those who come up from the coal face, serves tea and generally bosses "her men" around.

"Yes, it was great 10 years ago; we earned a good living and there was a spirit of competition. Well, I'm the patient sort — I was born in the north. We're bound to get a decent living one day or other."

Ivanovna is not the worst off of the people who work for Vorkuta-Ugol, the 85 per cent state-owned company that runs the eight mines still in operation. She has retired — which does not stop her continuing to work. Although she is no longer getting her wages, she can rely on a pension of \$40 a month.

Since the "disappearance of money", as one Severnyy miner puts it, Vorkuta has had to devise its own crisis economy. Miners earned \$350-\$1,000 per month before the rouble was devalued in August. They have survived since then only thanks to the many ingenious barter systems set up by the town hall and Vorkuta-Ugol.

The management at Vorkuta-Ugol admits it cannot pay its workers' salaries in full. "To do that, our buyers and the government would have to be solvent," says manager Vacheslav Davidoff. "Only 40 per cent of our output is paid for in cash. The remaining 60 per cent is exchanged for food, oil and operating equipment."

In October, when the miners ended their picket in front of the White House and an agreement was signed between their unions and the government, they received an initial payment of one month's salary as part of their pay arrears, which now total \$3.2 million.

Vorkuta has had to come to terms with grinding poverty. After spending six hours at the coal face, Boris collects his fur hat, frayed parka and old plastic shopping bag. He is 47, looks 15 years older, and has been working at the Vorkutsky mine since 1971.

"My job is to maintain the gallery props," he says. "It's very hard work — it mostly has to be done by hand,



Protesting for pay . . . but Russia's coal miners are still waiting for their wages

as the machines can't get in there."

It is -20C as Boris waits for the bus that will take him into town. "We've been broken, crushed," he says. He explains how, although unable to pay its workers' wages, Vorkuta-Ugol provides a basic minimum by granting advances of up to \$30 a month. At the mine canteen, meals are "free" in that their cost is deducted from a future — and hypothetical — salary. At the Vorkutsky mine, a meal of cabbage, potatoes and meat balls or fish costs the equivalent of 50 cents.

The canteen has also become a grocery. "I use vouchers to feed my four kids — they enable me to buy bread, milk and sometimes potatoes," says Boris. The mine distributes up to 23 vouchers (worth 50 cents each) per month as an advance on wages.

TECHNICIAN Mikhail Timokhin, aged 44, was on an inspection tour 550m below ground at the Severnyy mine. He has been working there for 22 years and knows every nook and cranny of its 110km of galleries. "In the old days, everything was well lit, and the walls of the main galleries were painted. Now the mining company can't afford the electricity, so people work in the dark."

To get to the coal seams, miners have to walk for half an hour in icy draughts produced by ventilators. "We extract 800 tonnes a day," said one miner, slumped against a hydraulic prop. What about safety? "You must be joking," he said. Two men had been crushed to death the

previous week in another pit. At least 35 people have been killed in Vorkuta's mines since the beginning of the year. In January there was an explosion at the Tsentralnaya mine which left 23 dead. The galleries had to be flooded, but some coal seams are still smouldering.

"Our technical equipment is ageing, and we can't invest," says the head of the Severnyy mine. "As the miners aren't getting paid, discipline has slackened and this has affected safety — relations with their foremen are tense," Timokhin admits.

Productivity bonuses, which can amount to 60 per cent of pay, mean that miners tend not to pay enough attention to the state of the galleries. Even though salaries are not being paid, the quantity of coal they extract often determines the amount they get in advances.

Sergei Usayova, aged 32, works at the coal face 900m below ground in the Severnyy mine. "Just as many miners died 10 years ago as today," he says. "The difference then was that people kept quiet about it. They said: 'Yes, general.' Yes, parly. All that's changed now. When a boss asks me to do something, I think about it, then I say to him: 'Look, why should I go crawling down there in all that shit? Who'll feed my family if I never come back?'" Usayova is a miner's son and was born in Vorkuta. "I'm fed up with complaining," he says. "I want to work 20 hours a day and earn loads of money so I can get out of here and have children."

Most people want to leave Vorkuta but cannot. "To make this

town work properly you'd have to evacuate 50,000 people," says mayor Slepukhin. "The far north is not a safe place for retired people, the disabled or families of accident victims."

The government had said it would do something about it. It promised air tickets, housing and even work in other regions. "Mines were closed, but no help came," says Vorkuta-Ugol management. Worse, ex-miners returned to the city so as to benefit from pensions and medical treatment, which are better than in the rest of Russia.

Boris says: "One can't stay here too long, the climate's too harsh. I have to get out, but where can I go? Ten years ago everything was paid for. A Black Sea holiday cost only 100 roubles [£6]. This year I had to borrow money to get away for three weeks."

Usayova is fed up with waiting for things to get better. "What I dream of is getting a little money, buying someone to find me a job in the south and getting out of here."

It is the kind of dream that brings a wry smile to the lips of other miners. For them, Vorkuta has once again become what it was just after the closing down of the gulag: a city of exile for second-class citizens.

(November 24)

Le Monde

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Abbreviations: P - Professor; AP - Associate Professor; ASP - Assistant Professor; SL - Senior Lecturer; L - Lecturer; AL - Assistant Lecturer; PDF - Postdoctoral Fellow; RF - Research Fellow.

For further details of any of the above still vacancies please contact ACU (Advertising), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF, UK (internal. tel. +44 171 387 6572 ext. 208 (UK office hours); fax +44 171 383 0386; e-mail: appts@acu.ac.uk), quoting reference number of post(s). Details will be sent by airmail/first class post. A sample copy of the publication *Appointments in Commonwealth Universities*, including subscription details, is available from the same source.

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UniS

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School of Engineering in the Environment
Department of Civil Engineering

Research Fellow -
Pile Design

Salary up to £18,275 per annum

Applications are invited for a civil engineer to carry out fundamental experimental work aimed at allowing the determination of ground conditions from measurements made during auger piling.

The work is supported by EPSRC, and will be carried out in collaboration with Stent Foundations and Lancaster University, over a period of 18 months. It will involve both laboratory and field work, and represents an excellent opportunity to work on a challenging and innovative project.

Applicants may be graduates, but will preferably already have a PhD, and should have experience with geotechnical laboratory testing and instrumentation.

Applications in the form of a CV and covering letter (2 copies of both) with the names and addresses of two referees should be sent to: The Personnel Department (KD/rb/1698), University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH, UK, quoting Reference 1698.

The closing date for applications is Friday 8th January 1999.

Visit the University Web Site at <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/>
The University is committed to an Equal Opportunities Policy

APPOINTMENTS & COURSES 21

Oxfam Programme in DPRK (North Korea)

Oxfam's programme will continue water disinfection through the distribution of MTH chlorine and extend a pilot project of chlorine production from raw salt enabling selected county towns to produce their own means of water disinfection. Water testing laboratories will be supplied with equipment, chemicals and reagents. In order to test and monitor high risk water supplies. An assessment has been carried out by Oxfam of pump capacity and condition, and interventions designed to address these needs are included in the new programme for selected towns. We need the following staff to carry out the programme.

Programme Manager

9 month contract based in Pyongyang.

Salary: £18,455 p.a. (non-taxable)/£22,178 p.a. (UK taxable), plus accommodation
Ref: OS/PM/KOR/HM/QW

Key responsibilities: To represent Oxfam, to manage implementation of the programme, to be responsible for the setting of objectives, work plans and appraisal of staff performance. To produce donor narrative reports and financial reports and report to Oxfam headquarters on programme activities. To ensure that programme funds and materials are correctly managed.

Key competencies: Proven team management experience. Good writing and reporting skills. Experience of managing substantial programme budgets. Capacity for strategic thinking and analysis. Excellent communication skills, tact and diplomacy. Experience of public health programmes an advantage. Understanding and experience of NGO programmes.

Water and Sanitation Engineer

9 month contract based in Pyongyang.

Salary: £16,614 p.a. (non-taxable)/£19,787 p.a. (UK taxable), plus accommodation
Ref: OS/WSE/KOR/HM/QW

Key responsibilities: To undertake regular and detailed water surveillance work in the field, to undertake on the job training in the use of chlorine as a disinfectant, Delagua and chemical testing kits. To work on the distribution and use of chlorine supplied to ensure its appropriate use and to monitor improvements in water quality as a consequence.

Key competencies: Qualification to degree level or appropriate experience in public health, civil or mechanical engineering. Experience in water surveillance work. Experience of use of chlorine for urban water disinfection. Experience of desire to address needs in sanitation and hygiene promotion if required.

Water Quality Chemist/Engineer

9 month contract based in Pyongyang.

Salary: £16,614 p.a. (non-taxable)/£19,787 p.a. (UK taxable), plus accommodation
Ref: OS/WQCE/KOR/HM/QW

Key activities: As water sanitation engineer above and additionally, to work on Oxfam's continuing programme of installation and operation of OSEC units and to advise on other water treatment processes as required. To work on monitoring use of material and equipment supplied to strengthen the laboratory based water quality surveillance work.

Key competencies: Qualification to degree level in chemistry or public health or water quality testing laboratory experience. Experience in OSEC processes and other water treatment chemical processes. Experience in water surveillance work. Experience of use of chlorine for urban water disinfection.

Water/Sanitation Engineer (Mechanical)

9 month contract based in Pyongyang.

Salary: £16,614 p.a. (non-taxable)/£19,787 p.a. (UK taxable), plus accommodation
Ref: OS/WSEM/KOR/HM/QW

Key activities: As water sanitation engineer above and additionally, to work on the need for existing semi-urban or rural water system rehabilitation and maintenance. To specify and order new equipment required for repair and rehabilitation of water systems, to draw up and agree contractual arrangements for the installation of this equipment, to monitor the installation of this equipment.

Key competencies: Qualification to degree level in public health, civil or mechanical engineering. Experience of urban water system design, repair and rehabilitation. Experience of managing urban water system infrastructure works. Experience in water surveillance work. Experience of use of chlorine for urban water disinfection.

Office Manager/Logistician

9 month contract based in Pyongyang and/or Beijing.

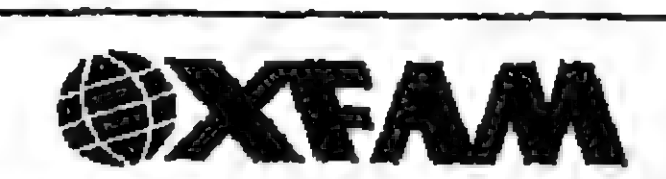
Salary: £14,200 p.a. (non-taxable)/£16,653 p.a. (UK taxable), plus accommodation
Ref: OS/OML/KOR/HM/QW

Key activities: Maintaining Oxfam financial systems and other financial records. Producing financial reports for donors and submitting other reports. Undertaking logistics tasks such as purchasing and transport of supplies. Tracking supplies. Run the office.

Key competencies: Qualifications and/or extensive experience in administration and logistics related skills. Experience of financial reporting to donors. Proven bookkeeping ability. Advanced spreadsheet skills (Excel an advantage). Experience of establishing office systems and purchasing.

For further details and an application form please send a large SAE to: International Human Resources, Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ quoting the appropriate reference number. Closing date for applications: 3 January 1999. Interviews to be held: 25-29 January 1999.

Founded in 1942, Oxfam works with people regardless of race or religion in their struggle against poverty. Oxfam GB is a member of Oxfam International. For further information <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>



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Johannes

22 APPOINTMENTS & COURSES

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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CIDSE CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIETNAM PROGRAMME

CIDSE is a non-government organisation working in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, supporting agriculture, irrigation, primary health care, credit and other rural development projects, and providing a range of training opportunities to project partners. Field Offices are in Hanoi, Phnom Penh and Vientiane and a project office in Ho Chi Minh City. The programme is coordinated by a lead agency in Belgium. Applications are invited from suitably qualified, highly motivated candidates for the position advertised below, which is based in Phnom Penh.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

Major areas of responsibilities include:

- Study overall context of development in Cambodia on an ongoing basis
- With wide participation, complete strategic plan
- Represent the CIDSE Cambodia programme
- Ensure the effective implementation and coordination of projects in Cambodia
- Ensure efficient administration and financial management
- Oversee personnel management
- Oversee and participate in development education, advocacy initiatives
- Facilitate process of selecting a Cambodian Field Representative
- Coach, train and prepare the selected Cambodian to assume the Field Representative position
- Prepare CIDSE Cambodia to function more autonomously

Person Specifications:

1. Minimum of 3 years previous experience as representative for an NGO
 2. Proven skills in management of projects
 3. Proven skills in administration, finances and personnel management
 4. Able to develop capacity of local staff
 5. Strong leadership qualities, communication skills and cultural sensitivity
 6. Relevant post-graduate qualification
- Contract Duration: 2 years, starting June 1999
Provisional interview schedule: February 1999

Applications:

Job descriptions are available on request. Applications close on 22 January 1999. Send your curriculum vitae, a list of references and a letter addressing each of the specifications listed above to: Mrs. Leen Van Helleputte, CIDSE CLV Programme, Huidevettersstraat 165, 1000 Brussels, Belgium. Fax (322) 502-5127, Phone (322) 502-5858, E-mail CLVPROG@EUNET.BE

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR

Major areas of responsibility include:

- Assist the Cambodian ICD Department in strengthening its programmes in four provinces
- Facilitate discussions and preparation of strategic and annual plans
- Assist staff in preparing and managing programme evaluations, following up on findings and recommendations
- Assist staff in preparation of reports on ICD programmes for donor agencies
- Strengthen programme monitoring systems
- Facilitate ongoing discussion regarding programme implementation and strategic issues, and assist in strengthening coordination among programmes
- Train/coach staff on integrated community development and project management topics, and any relevant sectors
- Facilitate links between CIDSE and the development community in Cambodia and the region

Person Specifications:

1. Minimum of 3 years previous experience in community development project management, with strong emphasis on integrated development
 2. Post-graduate degree in field related to community development or specific sector
 3. Proven skills in project planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
 4. Proven skills in one or more specific sectors preferred, including credit, agriculture, health, water/sanitation or education
 5. Able to develop capacity of local staff
 6. Strong communication skills, cultural sensitivity
- Contract Duration: 2 years, starting February 1999

Applications:

Job descriptions are available on request. Applications close on 31 December 1998. Send your curriculum vitae, a list of references and a letter addressing each of the specifications listed above to: Brian Helder, CIDSE Cambodia, P.O. Box 5, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Fax (855) 1881-0761, E-mail cidsecam@bigpond.com.kh

ANGLIA BUSINESS SCHOOL

MBA - MASTER IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION Cambridge, England Starts 1st February 1999

This one year full time MBA Programme is intensive, interdisciplinary and international in focus. It is designed for graduates with some industry experience and for those who aspire to senior management positions (also available September 1999).

Other programmes offered in (September 1999) are: are Part-time, Executive MBA; Full time, MA International Business, MA International Business Economics, MA Arts Administration

For further details please contact: Linda Lawrence, Anglia Business School, Division of Management Development, East Road, Cambridge, England CB1 1PT. Tel: +44 (0) 1223 363271 ext 2228 Fax: +44 (0) 1223 352800

email: l.lawrence@mercury.anglia.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.anglia.ac.uk/bmd/abs/md/MBAFT.htm>

ANGLIA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
is currently filling the position of

DIRECTOR, UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION (UIE) HAMBURG, GERMANY

Main Responsibilities

- The UNESCO Institute for Education is responsible, within UNESCO, for policy development, research, and training, and international co-operation in the field of adult learning, and the follow-up to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education.
- The incumbent will provide leadership to the Institute's programme, ensure its implementation and secure additional financial resources through fund-raising.

Requirements

- Ph.D. or equivalent in any area related to adult learning.
- Knowledge of emerging adult learning in different national and regional contexts.
- At least 10 years experience in relevant research and development activities, with proven experience and recognition at an international level.
- Leadership qualities, excellent organizational skills.
- Experience in mobilization of financial resources.
- Excellent knowledge of English, working knowledge of French, knowledge of German would be an asset.

Salary and benefits

The post carries grade D-3 common to the UN system which includes a salary, plus a post adjustment, in the range of \$113,000 (with dependants) \$104,000 (without dependants) exempt from all direct taxation and an international benefits package.

Candidates should send a detailed curriculum vitae in English or French, stating their date of birth, nationality, and gender and attaching an identity photograph to, UNESCO, Chief Recruitment Section, Bureau of Personnel, 7 place de Fontenay, 75352 Paris 07-SF, France, no later than 20 December 1998.

Accountant

Emergencies Department

2 year contract

Salary: £19,787 UK taxable, plus accommodation and expenses whilst on assignment

Oxfam's Emergencies Department has a number of Emergencies Support Personnel (ESP) with skills in various fields who are deployable for assignments of up to three months (sometimes extendable) on emergency programmes. We are recruiting for an ESP Accountant to provide administrative and financial support to emergency programmes. The postholder need not be based in Oxford or the UK, and can be based anywhere in the world with good international access and communications.

Key competences:

- Several years' accounting experience with related overseas experience
- Computer literacy
- Experience of supervising/managing staff
- Teamwork, tact, flexibility and good interpersonal skills

Founded in 1942, Oxfam works with people regardless of race or religion in their struggle against poverty. Oxfam GB is a member of Oxfam International. For further information <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>

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WEBSITE EDITOR based in Brussels, Belgium

The international medical relief organisation Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is recruiting an experienced editor for its international website. This is a new and exciting senior position accountable to the Director of Communication. You will have proven skills in website building, editing and writing. You will be able to translate complex and varied information into accessible and user-friendly copy for non-specialist audiences, preferably written as a journalist.

You will have strong communication skills and an ability to work independently as well as to teams across cultural boundaries, night deadlines. The successful candidate will have English as a mother tongue with a strong working knowledge of French and will be able to work long hours and travel, often at short notice. Monthly salary approx. £7,000 D.F. gross plus benefits.

Please send your cover letter, CV and examples of published work to MSF website recruitment, MSF UK 124-132 Clerkenwell Rd, London EC1R 5JL. Tel: 0171 713 5600; Fax: 0171 7135004; E-mail: office@london.msf.org. Deadline for applications Dec 24th.

Astronomy Distance Learning Course

A nationwide course taught by the British Astronomical Association (BAA) and the Royal Society of Education (RSE). The course is designed for those who are interested in astronomy and wish to gain a qualification in the subject. It is a self-paced course and can be completed at any time.

Tel: +44 (0) 151 231 2307 Fax: +44 (0) 151 231 2308

Internet: <http://www.baa.org.uk>

Website: <http://www.baa.org.uk>

By post: BAA, 100, The Quadrant, London W1 8PF

By email: info@baa.org.uk

By fax: +44 (0) 151 231 2308

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APPOINTMENTS & COURSES 23

Health Unlimited

Community Health Trainer-three posts in Cambodia and Laos

These posts will manage and develop the community health component of PHC projects in which they are based. Responsibilities: to develop the community health approach, both with communities and with the provincial health department and organise training for the communities and counterparts. Requirements: two years' experience in community health, preferably including training of community health workers and TBAs. Experience of participatory techniques. Salary range: £10,000-£12,000

Public Health Coordinator-Cambodia

As part of a PHC project based in Preah Vihear, this post will advise and support the Provincial Health Department in developing the health care system and will provide training in planning and management. Requirements: a qualification in public health, two years' relevant work experience and 6 months' experience in a PHC project in a less developed country. There is scope for a project management role in this post. Salary range: £10,000-£13,000

Health Trainer- Laos

Based in a PHC project in remote Attapeu province. Responsibilities: establish a training/resource centre. Provide in-service training, help implement training needs assessment and design of training courses. The requirements of this post can be met by either a health professional with experience and aptitude for training, or a trainer with experience of primary health care. Experience of assessing training needs and designing courses is desirable. Salary range: £10,000-£12,000

Contracts are for 18 to 24 months and offer salary plus accommodation and living allowance.

For details (please state which job) and application form contact Madeleine Hammond, Health Unlimited, Prince Consort House, 27-29 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TS. Fax: 0171 582 5900 email ne161@dipl-nipex.com Closing date for returned applications 29 January 1999.

SWEDISH COMMITTEE FOR AFGHANISTAN

The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) is a well respected NGO which has worked with assistance programmes in health, education and rural development in Afghanistan since the beginning of the 1980's. The budget for 1998 is approximately £6 million. Main donors are Sida, ECU and UN-agencies.

Regional Manager

SCA is looking for a Regional Manager (RM) to be responsible for one of our three programme regions in Afghanistan. The RM will be stationed in Afghanistan and will be reporting to the Country Director at the Central Office in Peshawar, Pakistan. He/she will lead a work force of more than a hundred people, and will be in close contact with other NGOs as well as UN agencies and local authorities. The RM must be prepared to work and travel under sometimes primitive and arduous conditions.

The successful candidate should have a university degree or equivalent and have several years experience of project management in developing countries, with a proven team leader capacity. Experience of work in muslim countries and/or work in complex emergency situations is desirable.

SCA offers an internationally competitive salary and an attractive benefits package. Closing date is January 15, 1999.

Further information can be obtained from: Mikael Josefsson, e-mail: sida@afghanistan.ska.se tel: +46 8 660 85 30, fax: +46 8 660 85 48

Please send application with CV to: Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Södra 16, S-114 36 Stockholm

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1 Stockwell Green, London, England, SW9 9HP

Fax: +44 171-346-5955 e-mail: wse@cabroad.org.uk

An activity of Christians Abroad Charity No 263867

DFID has agreed with the Government of Tanzania to fund an Urban Districts Partnership Project (UDPP) which will provide budgetary support and technical assistance to 3 municipal councils in Tanzania. This will enable them to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by 'Local Government reform' to develop and deliver responsible quality basic services, particularly to the poorest members of their communities.



TANZANIA

Project Co-ordinator

Key Outputs of the UDPP include:

- the establishment of effective links between the project, Local Government Reform (LGR) and sector reforms;
- improved sustainable resource management and allocation in the 3 councils;
- enhanced capacity of the councils and other service providers to plan and manage demand-led services which benefit poor and vulnerable groups;
- strengthened capacity of community organisation and lower tiers of local government to manage and sustain demand-led services.

The UDPP is designed as a process project which, subject to the satisfactory outcome of a joint Government of Tanzania/DFID review at the end of the 15 month inception phase, is planned to run for a period of just over 5 years.

As Project Co-ordinator, you will have overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and implementation of the inception phase of the project in all 3 councils and for the establishment and maintenance of effective links with the Local Government Reform Team (LGR) in Dar es Salaam. Based in Dar es Salaam, but travelling extensively to Morogoro, Mbeya and Singida, you will have specific management and operational responsibilities to ensure that the milestones of the inception phase are achieved.

Specifically you will be involved in establishing strong and effective links with the LGR in the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government and undertaking a design workshop to clarify the outputs, activities and indicators of the inception phase in collaboration with LGR and the project councils.

QUALIFICATIONS

The position demands a first degree, preferably in Social Science, Economics or Public Administration. A Master's qualification in these fields is desirable but not essential. Work experience in Africa is essential, whilst work experience in East Africa and Tanzania is desirable. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are pre-requisite as is the ability to rapidly analyse and assess social, financial and institutional situations as well as lead and work as a team member.

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Hope lies in sight for ageing eyes

Sarah Boseley

THE success of an operation to restore the sight of a nearly blind man may hold out hope for thousands whose vision is falling with the onset of old age.

John Barr, a 70-year-old retired dentist, is one of the first guinea pigs for an experimental operation to counter the effects of macular degeneration — where the central part of the retina wears out. Between 500,000 and 2 million people in Britain have only peripheral vision as a result. They are unable to read, and many are registered partially blind.

Mr Barr is among the 10 per cent who have a particular form of the disease which may be operable. The treatment is still experimental, but his surgeon, David Wong of the Liverpool Royal Hospital, described it as the "single most important surgical development for many years".

Mr Wong, one of the few ophthalmic specialists in the world to have attempted the technique, said he had effectively made a healthy part of the eye take over the function of a damaged part. "This is the sort of thing every surgeon dreams of because it may transform the lives of so many people," he said.

Mr Barr is the seventh patient on whom Mr Wong has performed the operation. In three cases the treatment was thought to have failed, and in a further three it is too early to tell.

But since undergoing surgery Mr Barr's vision has significantly



The eye has it... David Wong (left) and John Barr PHOTO: DAVE KENDALL

improved. "In the right eye I lost most of the vision about six years ago," he said. "Then the left eye started to go the same way. The day after the operation I could see with that eye and my vision has got better and better. I can now read again, see who I'm looking at and do all sorts of fiddly jobs."

Mr Wong operated on the left eye, detaching the retina and making a fold in it so that when it was replaced, an undamaged part was in the centre of the retina, becoming the macula, which relays messages about colours and detail to the brain.

His sight is not perfect, he concedes. Things he sees with his left eye seem near, and far away with the right eye. "I have to keep closing one eye to see where things really are," said Mr Barr.

Antonia Chitty, the eye health policy officer for the Royal National Institute for the Blind, said: "This treatment is not relevant for the vast majority of people."

But others should not despair. "People with macular degeneration never lose all their sight. They can be helped to carry on living an independent life," she said.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

IS THERE any English word that rhymes with "orange"?

PERHAPS it will make you cringe. Or even cause you to binge. To find that the word infringe. Actually rhymes with orange. Plus several more that hinge. On sounds of a similar tongue. — Rollo Bruce, Horsforth, Leeds

THE 1985 Penguin Rhyming Dictionary considers the final syllable only and thus claims to rhyme "orange" with the likes of "syringe", "scavenger" and "lozenge". These, though, are weak rhymes. Walker's Rhyming Dictionary offered "sporange", meaning a spore-case, which is indeed in the Oxford English Dictionary. I'd like to see it used in a casual couplet, though... — Ian Shuttleworth, London

WHAT is the origin of the phrase "over a barrel"?

TO BE "whipped over a barrel" is to suffer one of the many methods of punishment invented by sailors, who have few rivals in this field. A mere whipping is painful enough, but seafarers discovered that the ordeal could be greatly increased by first wrapping the victim face-first around a large barrel, and binding his hands tightly to his feet. Then stretched, the flesh of the back is not only less able to disperse the force of a whiplash, but also more likely to tear and gape when the skin is finally broken.

TO complete the punishment, the miscreant would have stinging seawater splashed on his open wounds.

and then be left on deck as a deterrent to others. — Matthew Hendry, Cipar, Fife

IF I WERE given a loaded gun and diplomatic immunity, would it be all right to go and shoot General Pinochet?

WOULD suggest no, because of the direct consequences for yourself. Killing is an action that leaves a potential within your mind for very unpleasant, painful effects in the future. However, if it were of benefit to others to kill Pinochet it may be worth accepting these unpleasant consequences for the greater good. Those who wish for retribution can contemplate how Pinochet, in his

Any answers?

TO WHAT does the "pled" refer in the Pied Piper of Hamelin? — Roger O'Keefe, Cambridge

WHEN was the word "quack" first used to describe a bogus doctor, and why? — Rose Gamble, Stroud, Gloucestershire

WHEN was the first passport issued, and by whom? — Avril Bades, Rome, Italy

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171-444171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Letter from the Dordogne Michael Mills

Marriage à la mode

HAVING recently been to England, where my companion of 22 years and I got married with our grown-up children as witnesses, it was with trepidation that we tipped back home to our village in the Dordogne. Would the villagers be put out that, having lived here for 16 years and Madame even being a member of the *Conseil Municipal*, the village council, we had taken French leave (or *filé à l'anglaise* as French puts it) and gone abroad to do the deed?

The three-day drive back home to the Dordogne with a stop chez Madame's father in Paris, my new but somehow familiar father-in-law, was, I suppose, our honeymoon. Not that I'd have missed it for the world. But there was one bit for which the blushing bride and I had been, so to speak, girdling our loins: the tradition, in this part of the world, of waking up newly-weds in the middle of the night with a tureen of *tournain*, or garlic soup.

Elsewhere they might clamour for bloodstained sheets on the balcony the next morning. Here, they bang you up in the small hours. And just in case the newlyweds need persuasion in addition to their own no doubt freshly discovered bodily charms, the *tournain* ought to do the trick. It is of the particularly spiced variety, designed to heat the young lovers' blood and presumably their ardour.

We knew something was up when, a couple of days after our return, our farming neighbour Michel rang to ask if we were going out that evening. No, I heard my bride say. *Payait*, he said. And if your new husband suggests going out, say you've got a headache, *d'accord?* So we sat down to supper that evening wondering whether to get an early night, expecting to be woken in the middle of it, or just wait until he and a couple of friends turned up.

We were still wondering at 9.30, when some curious scuffling outside the door was followed by a knock. Being a kind-hearted lot, our neighbours had decided not to wait until the middle of the night. There they all were: not just a few neighbours, but the whole *Conseil Municipal* as well, nearly 30 people all told, or about a third of the village.

A Country Diary

Ray Collier

RIVER FINDHORN: There was that indescribable feeling that something was watching me. Sometimes such feelings are pleasant, such as the time when a silver deer stag was watching me from dense cover; but this time there was almost a sense of foreboding.

There were mountain hares in view, but they were some way off, and they sat at the entrance to their holes being conspicuous in their white winter coats. Perhaps the foreboding was from the strath, as the area I was standing in had steep sides with the river racing between, and hills brooding over the scene.

Then there was a snort and I turned to see the cause of my feelings — a large billy goat was peering over a ridge at me a few metres away. Perhaps I had surprised him (as indeed he

In they all waited, grinning hugely, three or four staggering under the weight of the stone fountain that was the village's wedding present to us. They also bore a large container of thoroughly drinkable Bergerac, most of which disappeared in the next two hours, and the ingredients for making *tournain*. As we scuttled about fetching chairs and pouring wine, Michel's wife Martine chopped onions and garlic and cut bread.

The masterstroke came from Guitou, our lovely neighbour up the hill, who has watched over us with motherly care since we first came to live here with our babies nearly 17 years ago. (Our youngest, only four months old, spent her days in a Moses basket by Guitou's huge fireplace, watched over by *grandmère* Marcelle, who would croak a warning shout whenever the baby demanded food.)

GUITOU had brought her own tureen, in it a special *tournain* to be drunk by only the blushing bride and her ardent groom. So while Martine dished up her *tournain du peuple* to the others, we drank our own special brew, enriched with what its author said were ingredients secrets.

As the others drank and then half-filled their bowls for a handsome *chabrol* (which means pouring a spoonful or two of wine into your empty bowl, swishing it about so that it warms slightly and collects any loitering soup, then picking up the bowl and gulping it all down), they of course filled mine to within a hair's breadth of the brim, and then half again. All eyes were expectantly upon us.

Whatever secret ingredients went into Guitou's *tournain des jeunes mariés*, they gave us both an immediate heady whiff and a twinkle to the eye. If successful fertility rites were the name of the game, they should perhaps have left then. But they didn't, and it turned into a very jolly party.

We finally climbed happily into bed two hours later. No sooner had our curly locks touched the pillow, though, than it was nearly nine hours later and bright morning. We had slept like angels.

certainly had me) and we stood looking at each other for a few minutes. He seemed alone, which is not unusual as he appeared old; binoculars enabled me to count the growth rings on the huge black horns, indicating he was eight or nine years old.

What I could see of him, head, neck and shoulders, was completely black, and the horns were some of the most impressive I had seen in the tribes of wild goats that haunt the banks of the River Findhorn. Then the billy was off, and for some distance I watched him, as always admiring the casual-looking walk that covers the ground so deceptively quickly. I wandered on down the strath thinking of the very apt words from Charles St John in the middle of the 19th century: "I do not know a river that more completely realises all one's ideas of beauty in the Highland scenery than the Findhorn."

Handwritten note in the right margin: "I do not know a river that more completely realises all one's ideas of beauty in the Highland scenery than the Findhorn."

Shimmeringly minimal

POP
Caroline Sullivan

"SOD OFF," said the T-shirt, which is no way for a lady to talk. For £15, though, a tight black Sod Off T-shirt with Björk's name on the back could be yours. But why Sod Off? Like many things about Iceland's biggest musical export, there's no real explanation.

Björk's circumstances give her no obvious reason to sulk: 1998 has seen her win a Brit Award and complete a successful world tour of the album *Homogenic*. So can we take Sod Off to be a perverse Nordic greeting? Or an example of her playful relationship with the English language (which reached surreal heights when she accepted her Brit with the words "I am grateful grapefruit")? Or maybe she really does mean sod off — to the legions whose comprehension of her extends no further than the adjectives elfin and pixie-like. "They always say elfin," she was complaining as far back as the release of her groundbreaking solo debut, *Debut*, in 1993.

Her looks are both blessing and curse — blessing because they drew attention to her voice, which remains one of the most distinctive in music; curse because her sprite-face has got her pigeonholed as pop's mad Arctic cutie. It has also attracted some unhealthy dedicated fans, like the Florida man who committed suicide on videotape, and the Spaniard who broke into her mother's house and lived there for several days.

Some people, mistakenly, don't take her seriously, and her appearance at Birmingham Symphony Hall would have provided ammunition for that viewpoint. Her forehead was painted white with a stripe down the nose, and she was barefoot, which explained the roadie hovering the stage before the show. There was no obvious reason for this, but such was her magnetism that you simply accepted it, as you also accepted that she was accompanied not by a band but by a programmer and the Icelandic String Octet.

As ever, the show was a mixture of the organic and the synthetic, the contradiction expressed in the very stage decor. The backdrop was the wailing sort she favours, a piece of transparent material with red-and-black strips hanging down like cobwebs in a haunted house. The effect was that of air and water, a reminder that she gets much of her inspiration from the natural world.

But the other side of the equation was that much of the stage was taken up by keyboardist Mark Bell's electronic doodads. The organic/artificial divide was emphasised by the clash of Bell's pulses and beats and the Octet's soaring strings. The result, though, was minimal, spare and perfectly interlocking, rather like Björk herself.

That shimmering minimalism is what makes her so compelling. While there were times when she seemed not to know what to do with herself — and so did an unrhythmic pixie-shuffle to pass the time — she had cool, angular Presence with a capital P. Presence enabled her to change the already unique pronunciation on *Venus As A Boy* ("His



Touched by her presence: the compelling Björk

PHOTO: CHRIS RADBURN

weekend sense of humour") and emit wordless yelps for five minutes without alienating the audience. Presence allowed her to sing of private things ("How can you offer me love like that? I'm exhausted, leave me alone") and draw you into her world while never really giving much away.

Presence meant that the soft, melting Isobel was just as forceful as the sparse, percussive Hunter, and that when she said "I thought maybe people would stand up", they stood as one. Mostly, though, Presence meant that she could tell her people to sod off and know they'd be back for more.

Trumpet major

JAZZ CDs
Ronald Atkins

Miles Davis
The Complete Bitches Brew Sessions (Columbia AC4K 65570) (4CDs) £49.99

John Coltrane
Complete Impulse Studio Recordings (IMPDS-250) (8CDs) £49.99

WHEN Columbia released from their vaults years ago two albums of unissued Miles Davis material, we thought that was it. Now they present us with the six tracks that made up Bitches Brew (1969), some others from the same sessions put out elsewhere, and a few from nine completely new tracks, of which only a couple are reissues of tunes issued at the time.

There were precursors, notably Davis's *In A Silent Way*, but Bitches Brew was the album to confirm the demise, temporarily at least, of anything to do with bebop, and to replace it with jazz-rock, fusion or whatever as the dominant strain. Part of an intense bout of studio recording, it included many of the great musicians associated in one form or another with Davis during the sixties.

Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea, Joe Zawinul and John McLaughlin would each take elements from here and expand them within their own groups, influencing in turn the routes taken by jazz throughout the world. The context was startlingly fresh, but erupting from the dense, ever-changing patterns were declamatory trumpet passages — wide-ranging, brooding, supremely majestic and packed with drama — that harked as far back as his Milesones days.

In a sense, Bitches Brew is transitional. Shortly afterwards, Davis discovered the wah-wah pedal, and blending the textures became his absolute priority. From that point onwards, there are few tracks one could recommend simply for trumpet solos.

John Fordham adds: The market catering for completists offers more ironies than most in the case of John Coltrane. Not only did he die at 40, and with the long preliminaries of his mission barely passed, but the art he was devoted to was one in which the notion of completion was a contradiction. What is countable by dates and events, however, is the life of what is now called Coltrane's "classic quartet" — the group comprising himself, McCoy Tyner, Jimmy Garrison and Elvin Jones that still inspires the sounds of countless bands around the world.

This eight-disc set, bound like a book and constrained in a metal sleeve bearing Trane's septa image, covers the period of studio recordings for the Impulse label from December 1961 to September 1965 — when Coltrane began to draw his pianist wife Alice and younger players from the emerging avant-garde into the group, triggering its eventual fragmentation.

But it isn't a nostalgic exercise, because this music's currency is still so vivid, and the urgency of its execution dazzling. Both long-standing and recent admirers will love it.

If you would like to order any of the box sets on this page contact CultureShop (see page 28). Pop is not included in quoted prices.

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1998GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1998

The art of armchair gardening

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

Often, as here, John Pittman, who also produced. Gardening is one thing the old do better. Gardening is the only thing the old do better.

Dennis (70) and David (73) have a mildly abrasive relationship, which creates a glow without bursting into flames. David, a retired headhunter, owns the garden. Dennis, who lives in a flat above him, does the gardening. I am not perfectly clear what a headhunter does but it became clearer as David talked. "I don't really do anything. I'm not interested in doing anything. I pick other people to do things."

(I could do that job. Why can't I have that job?)

"So long as the people I decentralise to are satisfied with the relationship. I'm quite prepared to sit back here and read my newspaper."

(Look, I'd really like that job.)

Outside the barred window (very rough, Chelsea and Kensington, people steal your peaches) Dennis could be seen bent into an industrious hoop. David doesn't actually pay him. (This man is a genius.) He gives him a bottle of wine a week. Dennis put the wine in a jam-packed rack. "As you can see, we're not great boozers."

Channel 4's publicity for Capital Gardens, probably transcribed phonetically, promised us Lady Evelyn Barbara-Rolley, widow of conductor Sir John Barbara-Rolley. I remember her well. She used to play the oboe in the Hallé.

Lady Barbrolli (87) is charming and beautifully at ease on camera. I've remembered one other thing the old do better. Television. Cameras don't frighten them.

The Turner dung good

THANKS to a large helping of elephant dung, conceptual art's hold on the Turner Prize was broken last week when Chris Ofili won the first painter to win the £20,000 prize since 1985, writes Dan Glatzier.

But he is not the sort of painter who would necessarily appease the traditionalists who have made a habit of protesting against the Turner Prize's recent championing of conceptual art. His colourful works include dried, resin-coated elephant dung, glitter and cartoon characters as well as incorporating references to black culture and Renaissance painting.

Ofili was the only man and the only painter among the four shortlisted artists. The last painter to win the prize was Howard Hodgkin in 1985. Ofili is the first black artist to win.

The judges praised "the originality and energy of his painting, and his dynamic use of colour". They also admired "the complexity of his work, with its multilayered references to contemporary urban culture and awareness of the history of art".

Ofili's win caps an astounding year for the young painter, following an acclaimed show in Southampton that later toured to the Serpentine Gallery in London. It is currently at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.



Ofili... first painter to win the Turner since 1985

PHOTO: EMMAH MACABE

Ofili is unafraid to incorporate contemporary politics into his work. One painting in the Turner Prize exhibition, *No Woman No Cry*, is a tribute to the dignity and suffering of Doreen Lawrence, the mother of the murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence.

Ofili was born in Manchester in 1968 and studied fine art at Chelsea School of Art before

completing a master's in painting at the Royal College of Art. The elephant dung, which he acquires free of charge from London Zoo, was inspired by a visit to Zimbabwe. He stands his paintings on the dung and sticks it to the canvas.

The other artists on the shortlist were Tacita Dean, Cathy de Monchaux and Sam Taylor-Wood.

A legend with the lens

OBITUARY
Freddie Young

FREDDIE Young, who has died aged 96, was the doyen of British cinematographers. He was a triple Oscar winner — for *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Doctor Zhivago* and *Ryan's Daughter* — and in 1972 was named as only the second Fellow of the British Association for Film and Television Arts; the first was Alfred Hitchcock. Young deserved the honours, for his distinguished career, and as a recognition for the role he had represented for 50 years.

Whatever hand the director plays in the screenplay or in the editing room, a talented director of photo-

graphy adds an indispensable, independent pair of eyes, to which novice directors often owe success and experienced ones learn to respect. Young provided that after 70 or a hundred movies. By 1972, at just 70, he had recently completed a 15-month slog on David Lean's *Ryan's Daughter* (1970). On the epic *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) his shimmering work added immeasurably to the film's stature.

He joined the industry during the silent era and was first credited as assistant cameraman on Rob Roy (1922). The first of his colour successes, *Gabriel Pascal's Caesar and Cleopatra* (1946), was not a happy experience. The huge sets, all-star cast and interminable schedule,

proved an apprenticeship in stamina for Lean's similarly profligate *Ryan's Daughter*. However, it boosted Young's career and for 25 years he worked non-stop on A movies, often for MGM and for American directors working in Britain.

Surprisingly, in his mid-80s, Young turned director. Arthur's *Howl* (1988) was a modest, personal film starring Jimmy Jewel as a cricket groundsman who is determined to protect his pitch against officialdom. It proved a charming coda to Young's career.

Twice married, he is survived by his wife Jean and son David.

Brian Baxter

Frederick (Freddie) A Young, cinematographer, born October 9, 1902; died December 1, 1998

They've been frightened by experts. I always meant to tell you about the flowers the Queen Mother got when she laid the stone for the National Theatre. It was, I suspect, Lord Olivier's bright idea, being composed of plants mentioned by Shakespeare. "Rose, daffodil, rue, woodbine, willow [it gets better] leek, dock leaf, dogwood, bogwort, disordered twig, dandel, hemlock, rank fumitory, rough thistle, kecksie, bur, crowsfoot, nettles, long purples." Long purples, as Shakespeare pointed out, are *plain rude*.

When I had flu in California I was given a vitamin B injection — at least I hope it was — in my bottom. Well, you don't like to argue, Julie Walters has the same effect on *Dinnerladies* (BBC1). Instant invigoration and aching embarrassment.

She plays Petula, allegedly Bren's mother, though Bren (Victoria Wood) doesn't seem too sure. Petula's past is rickety and her present unsavoury. Last week she

turned up with a toyboy. This week with a policeman. "It's not how it seems, sweetheart," she said, extending a hand to Bren. The other, it became clear, was handcuffed to the policeman, whom she addressed fondly as Kirsty. Julie gazed admiringly at this pillar of rectitude. "Gorgeous, isn't she? Like a white Nina Simone."

I was reminded of Hylda Baker, a twisted little corkscrew of a comedienne, gazing admiringly at her huge and speechless sledge. "She knows you know!"

Dame Thorn Hird arrived like Boadicea with scythes on her wheelchair. When Celia Imrie said she came from Surrey, Dame Thora just *muttered*. I laugh whenever I hear that and I wish I knew how she did it. As Ralph Richardson said conspiratorially to Donald Sinden, when he heard he was writing about acting, "Don't tell them how it's done!"

I don't think any of them know how it's done.

Squeals of horror

CINEMA
Xan Brooks

THERE'S a kid sitting two rows down from me at the Babes: *Pig In The City* preview. When the curtain goes back, this kid lets out a euphoric roar. Later on — at about the time when Mickey Rooney's clown has a heart attack and dies — he is led ashore from the cinema. Minutes pass. On screen, a pit bull dog is simultaneously being throttled by his choke-chain and drowned head-first in a canal. Off screen, two more children flee soft-footed up the aisle.

This quiet exodus serves as a sideshow throughout *Pig In The City*. What we have here is a curious and perverse creature: a film with a death-wish; a picture that bites the hand that feeds it. I rather liked it.

Directed by George (Mad Max) Miller, *Pig In The City* arrives in Britain trailed by disastrous word of mouth. Its intricate post-production has run wildly over schedule. Most worrying were the reports of

ghostly test screenings in the US, with unimpressed audiences apparently judging Miller's handling "too dark" by half. Well, at least they had that right. *Pig In The City* is positively char-grilled.

Let us assume that these incredible vanishing children are fans of the original *Babe*. They saw it during its Christmas 1995 release. They thrilled to its seamless mix of live-action animals with digital puppetry, its charming, witty script and low-key vegetarian agenda. So they're money along to see the sequel and are confronted by an altogether different kettle of fish; less bright, less funny, less sweet-natured than the *Babe* of old. Poor lambs — it must be like peeling off some finically Christmas-wrapping and finding a horror mask inside.

Full marks for daring, then. What's less expected is that *Babe* turns out all right in the end. Admittedly, *Pig In The City* is far from perfect. This has the thumbprints of a troubled editor all over it.

Its story is segmented into awkward chapters (*Chaos Theory*, *Chaos Revisited*). The set-up is perfunctory, the ending alarmingly abbreviated. Yet nestled in the middle lies the real meat of the film; and a surprisingly rich and exotic meat it is. *Pig In The City* — a voice-over informs us — is set in a place just a

little to the left of the 20th century", and hops quickly from the story-book-rustle farm owned by Boss Hoggett (James Cromwell) to a generic urban jungle where Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower and Sydney Opera House all share the same cramped stretch of skyline.

"Sleepy" *Babe* (again voiced by E. G. Daily) is in town to test his herding skills at the State Fair but gets separated from the matronly Mrs Hoggett (Magda Szubanski) and falls in with Mickey Rooney's rag-bag troupe of circus monkeys (voiced by the likes of Steve Wright, Glenn Headly and James Cosmo). Hopping up at a flea-pit hotel, he becomes a messiah-type ("His Pinkness") for the town's walls and strays, feeding the hungry from a jar of jelly-beans before city pound workers break in, bust up the party and cart all and sundry off to the vivisection lab.

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In this way, *Pig In The City* takes its animal inhabitants and turns them into a symbol for downtrodden, oppressed humanity; victims of a world bred in tooth and claw.

Such maudlin, melancholic vignettes are what work best. They leave an impression that lasts longer than all those clever anatomical or the incongruous pantomime of its knockabout finale.

Book-ended by schematic fluff, Miller's folly lides for a time in a fabulous hinterland which is more Delicatessen than *Teletubbies*, more art-house than kindergarten, and altogether too sad and cruel for the audience it's pitched at. So who cares if the kids couldn't take the pressure? Films like this are wasted on the young.

Room for swingin' cats

POP CD
Adam Sweeting

Frank Sinatra
The Capitol Years (Capitol) £150

WHILE John Lennon and Bruce Springsteen are making their bids for your Yuletide dollar with paltry four-CD sets, Frank Sinatra arrives with an enormous crash with this vast 21-disc box to remind everyone who's still Boss. By and large, experts agree that Sinatra's body of work for Capitol, recorded between 1953 and 1962, represents the summit of his artistic career, and it's assembled here in its entirety. After the chaos and bad feeling surrounding the legendary crooner's will and legacy, this is the most emphatic possible reminder of what all the fuss was about.

Later, Sinatra would go on to make excellent recordings for his own label. Reprise, but the Capitol years caught him in his prime while also teaming him up with musical directors Billy May, and, especially, Nelson Riddle. Billy May was the singer's original choice of collaborator, but when touring engagements meant May was unavailable, Sinatra made a bee-line for Riddle and set about recording his Capitol debut, *Songs For Young Lovers*. It's not unreasonable to say that the album promptly altered the course of the popular music of the day, an amazing feat for a singer who had been written off by critics during the career slump that knocked the stuffing out of him in the late 1940s.

The high proportion of classic songs (*A Foggy Day*, *My Funny*

Valentine, *Someone To Watch Over Me* et al) was evidence of the impeccable taste in material which was a hallmark of Sinatra at his peak. Perhaps most of all, Riddle's discreet but swinging arrangements brought out the feel for jazz which Sinatra had developed during his stint with Tommy Dorsey's band during the forties.

With Riddle, Sinatra proceeded to punch out a stream of matchless albums. The ineffably poignant *In The Wee Small Hours* was followed by the zinging and zestful *Songs For Swingin' Lovers*. A *Swingin' Affair* picked up where the latter left off, while Riddle excelled himself by concocting the broody arrangements for *Only The Lonely* in a week.

Of the recordings Sinatra made without Riddle, the most celebrated was *Come Fly With Me*. Powered along by Billy May's bouncing, muscular arrangements, the disc perhaps more than any other summed up the remarkable artistic renaissance Sinatra had enjoyed since he joined Capitol. It captured a sense of brash all-American optimism in its songs, an impression compounded by the sleeve artwork of gleaming airliners ready to whisk passengers off to romantic and exotic destinations.

There isn't a lot to criticise, except perhaps the flimsy and badly punctuated booklet, a miserable effort compared to the lavish productions which accompanied the previous Capitol Years collection or 1996's *Complete Capitol Singles Collection*. But this is music which will never let you down.

Mantras in the blood

CLASSICAL
Tim Ashley

THE Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir, founded in 1981 by the conductor Tõnu Kaljuete, have assumed something like cult status, largely through their association with the music of Arvo Pärt, whose works they have extensively performed and recorded.

Pärt's *Litany* formed the centre-piece of their programme for a whistle-stop tour of the UK — three venues on three consecutive nights — and when the final chords faded away in the packed Queen Elizabeth Hall on London's South Bank, they were greeted with rapturous applause which turned into a standing ovation when Pärt himself, looking shy and modest as always, appeared on the platform. Both the choir and Kaljuete's other ensemble, the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra, seemed slightly surprised, as if they hadn't expected such a reception.

Pärt's appeal is understandable, a combination of approachability and spiritual certainty. *The Litany* is the music of devotional ritual. Setting St John Chrysostom's mantra-like prayers for the 24 hours of the day, it contemplates timeless-ness and eternity. Four soloists — in this case the Hilliard Ensemble on excellent form — act as celebrants, their chanting, free-flowing lines subtly shifting with each repetition, gradually

subsuming both chorus and orchestra into the texture, as the music builds to an imposing climax. The effect is hypnotic. If it's not done well, it can also be soporific. The Estonians have this music in their blood, however, and the piece was riveting from start to finish.

They also brought with them works by Pärt's younger compatriot Erkki-Sven Tüür. His music is similarly rooted in spirituality, though he's rather different from Pärt, favouring big architectural structures rather than creating density by means of repetitions.

This music is less timeless, less ritualistic, and you're occasionally strongly aware of his influences. His *Passion For Strings* begins with slow double bass phrases, which gradually unwind after the fashion of Gorecki's famous *Third Symphony*, then pass through the orchestra, finally fading out in an unearthly fluttering high in the violins.

Tüür's *Requiem* sets the entire Latin text in a single unbroken span, beginning with low bass chanting, broadening to take in the full forces, then sinking back into the depths.

It's a comparatively serene piece: the *Dies Irae*, despite melodic references to Berlioz's cataclysmic setting, holds no terrors; polytonal clashes and unresolved harmonies created moments of sustained intensity. I felt that Tüür hasn't fully found his voice yet — but when he does, the results will be fascinating.

The words before the fall

Natesha Walter

Letters from a Lost Generation
edited by Mark Bostridge and Alan Bishop
Little, Brown 428pp £18.99

THERE is nothing to touch Vera Britain's Testament Of Youth as an account of the first world war from the female point of view. In that memoir Britain gave us the tale of a cool young woman who fell into the emotional and physical fury of the war, and she took her readers with her. I opened this volume of letters with the expectation of revisiting the experience and it certainly replays some of the same themes, but it has its own, rather different strengths.

Neatly edited by Mark Bostridge and Alan Bishop, this book doesn't confine itself to Vera's experience. It is a collection of the letters that she wrote to her brother, Edward; her beloved fiancé, Roland Leighton; their two friends, Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow; as well as the letters that they wrote to her and to one another.

Bostridge has, I think rightly, edited down Vera's own letters so

that the details we know so well are reduced. Instead, the light is thrown on to the men in her circle, the four beautiful and intelligent young men who left school in 1914 and were all dead by 1918.

The emotional punch can be put down to various causes. One, although it sounds callous to say it, is the perfection of the tragedy played out in it. It reads with the clean finish of fiction, this tale of an innocent young woman standing among four brave men, all of whom die by one, starting with her fiancé and ending with her brother. Blow falls after blow in this book, and the best fiction writer couldn't better the rhythms with which they fall.

There is the growing intimacy between Vera and Victor, ending with the finest letter he wrote: "Well, Vera, I may not write again, and so it is time to take a long, long adieu." He wrote that sentence two weeks before he received the head wound that later killed him. There are the excited letters and telegrams that pass between Vera and Roland as they plan their Christmas leave in 1915. Vera ends up in grand romantic style: "We have not fulfilled ourselves. Someday we

shall live our roseate poem through." One turns the page to find the description of Roland's funeral that his father sent to Vera.

This collection of letters is surprisingly complete, and its to-and-fro of correspondence spans a curious mixture of styles and emotional pitches. The best letters, in terms of their cadences and expressiveness, are certainly Vera's and Roland's.

As high-minded, sheltered young people who had brought themselves up on Swinburne they shared an idiom that could shade into rhetoric, but at best was precise and charming. Watching their love grow on the page is an almost scary moving thing.

When Roland gets back to France after his leave in which they became engaged, he writes: "All is unreal but the memory and the pain and the insatiable longing for something which one has loved. There is sunshine on the trees in the garden and a bird is singing behind the hedge. I feel as if someone had uprooted my heart to see how it was growing."

This book fleshes out the individuality of each of the young men through his language: the poetic grandeur of Roland, the gentler,

simpler style of Edward, the slight brusqueness of Victor, the attractive, jumpy diffidence of Geoffrey. Alongside the passages that move up a notch to poetry, the writers are fluent and fascinating just on the business of their lives. They reflect on war — but they also live it, telling each other about the box of toffees that kept them going, or the dead horse they fell into that nearly finished them, their naked encounter with the prime minister or their first encounter with death.

But the fierce pull that the ideal of patriotic duty had over them unites them all. Its constant expression brings home to us a little more clearly why a generation of young men were prepared to kill and die in such gruesome ways. Right up to the end Roland reflects that war brings out all that is finest in human nature, and Geoffrey is worried that he might not distinguish himself in battle. "I wish for the School's sake only that it might be otherwise," he writes pathetically.

These letters also communicate the visceral excitement of young people keyed up at all the noise and danger and ferocity of war, and who at first, naturally, thought themselves inviolable. Even in 1916 Victor could write that trench life was, simply, "very enjoyable and a

welcome change from England."

This enjoyment of the noise and clamour of war surfaces occasionally throughout the book, coexisting with the writers' growing sense of disillusionment and tragedy. The militarist ethos of the men she loved infected Vera, although she became a pacifist after the war. One month after her lover was killed, we find her writing to her brother, "I do condemn War in theory... but there are some things worse than even War, and I believe even wholesale murder to be preferable to atrocity and effeteism."

This culture, in which poetry and individualism mixed with militarism and jingoism, died with the generation.

A reader today can note the strain in the writers' thoughts, their over-reliance on "glamour" and "heroism" in the face of mud and murder. But it would take an oddly cold reader not to feel for their unforced and passionate love for one another and for the natural world, and not to find tears in their eyes more than once before the final page, when the letters of condolence after Edward's death are laid out and Vera falls silent, left alone on the stage.

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underlying disturbing thought that we are even less well ruled than we thought we were when such British dolls can command influential positions. (And Seitz, a career diplomat rather than a wealthy patron, is comparatively top-traveler.)

Seitz actually identifies his problem — without inking the conviction that it applies to him: "For a diplomat there is a fine line between educating your own government about another government's point of view and becoming an advocate for that same point of view. In the language of Foggy Bottom, this is called 'clientitis'."

Seitz is feverish with clientitis; witness his description of the arg-bargy he had with Jean Kennedy Smith, who, as ambassador to Ireland, trampled all over the British (and Seitz's) delicate feelings: "It became obvious she wanted to promote the reunification of both parts of Ireland, even if one of the parts happened to live in the United Kingdom." By any diplomatic standards this is knuckle-duster stuff.

Still, the book is curiously gripping, in so far as we squirm with pleasure when anyone from America tickles our tummies. Seitz loves us Brits to bits and the book's ending is genuinely moving. He's probably not a bad chap. Once, during the ERM crisis, he was talking to Major at No 10 when they heard a crash. "What was that?" asked Major. "The pound?" said Seitz.

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GUARDIAN WEEKLY
December 13 1998

Poison pen pals

Sally Vincent

Mr Vidia's Shadow: A Friendship Across Five Continents
by Paul Theroux
Farnish Hamilton 376pp £17.99

YOU can see how they came to hit it off in the first place. Brave wandering souls, men of the wide world, seekers after truth, writers who took their work seriously as they took themselves, which was very seriously indeed. When V S Naipaul spoke of "inferiors", those who were not as they. There was an inclusiveness in the dimunition that appealed to a prospect of superior intimacy. For surely a man would never say "inferior" to an infirmary. Twenty-four years old and hoping to write for a living, you'd have to be a total stranger to vanity to pass up the chance of a mutual admiration society with an established literary lion just because he occasionally threw out the odd intimation of an overweening personality. Nor, after 30-odd years of the fastidious intellectual and emotional propinquity men call friendship, would you expect to be unaffected by a similar arrogance.

Theroux knew in advance of the publication of this memoir that it would be misunderstood by "literary philistines and lazy intellectuals". Theroux laments the alacrity with which media infies have leapt to conclude that his labours merely outline something as mundane as a quarrel or, worse, a literary feud. Foreseeing further idle speculation, he directs philistines towards Ford Madox Ford on the subject of his friendship with Joseph Conrad as a suitably vigorous case for literary comparison. He has been still more generously informative with parallels in the book: confessing the difficulties inherent in embarking on such an original and unique work, he offers the precursory influences of Boswell and Johnson, Henry James, Turgenev, Gorky, Tolstoy, Flaubert, Beckett and Joyce. Good company, it seems, is of the essence.

The "shadow" of the title is a little puzzling in this context. If a shadow is the shape we cast when we stand between light and substance, it is

also the thing that proves we are not, as we might fear, holes in the air. Much of Theroux's test indicates, with and without irony, that he perceived himself as Naipaul's shadow in the sense of follower and helpmeet, page to his knight, attendant upon his most prosaic whim, accepting without rancour the most stringent terms of reciprocity from a man he also took to be an inveterate snob, a shameless free-loader, whoremonger and woman-hater. Yet from the same account we learn that, like all self-absorbed people, Naipaul was never ambiguous about his expression of himself, that his ruthless candour informed the relationship defined here as a friendship over 30 years and, yes, five continents, and that in that time and space he trusted himself to his friend without self-editing his many vices and solipsisms.

Apart from its exceptional articulacy, this was a long-term intimacy like any other between flawed individuals. Sadly, it seems to have been that articulacy that has unbalanced this scenario. A mean remark between friends is just that; a secret exposed, a small unlovely facet of the whole person to which the other has been made privy. Once such expressions are written down and nailed to print they are transformed into declarations.

Theroux's perspective is necessarily passed along a prism of the pain of personal rejection. The man he remembers is eternally the man who closed the account, the traitor who for no known reason and with no explanation or apology, ended the friendship. To have the capacity to do such a brutal thing is infinitely mysterious, yet you cannot invite a friend or lover to collude in their own abandonment and walk calmly into the primal anguish it evokes.

Theroux describes the final, accidental encounter with Naipaul when Naipaul's advice on how to bear rejection was to "take it on the chin". In the next breath, as it were, Theroux feels himself to be gloriously liberated, free at last to shine his own light on all that went before.

But again the perspective clouds narrative. It denies any preamble or clue to the break-up while simultaneously describing with fatal chrono-



Writer's block... Theroux publicly bemoans the end of his private friendship with V S Naipaul

logy a series of events that could have led nowhere else. One hears the wail of a downhearted, frail woman divesting herself irretrievably for the loss of her lover. SHE stole my man. He left me for THAT! For Sir Vidia married. Two months after the death of his first wife he had the temerity to re-enter matrimony with a lady unknown to Theroux.

According to acquaintances, she was a kind of Pakistani Glenda Slagg, an adventuress who pretended knowledge of and passion for Naipaul's writing in order to commend herself to his vanity and his bed. Thereafter Theroux received a *blister* from an American bookseller, offering him options on first editions of his own books, signed by himself in happier days and presented to Naipaul and his late partner. The lady, he mused, was house clearing in her traditional

way. Later there was a fax, unsolicited, scruffy, semi-literate and hostile from the lady herself.

Theroux cherishes the obvious imperinence and vulgarity of these missives. Knowing how profoundly offended Naipaul would be, how much he would suffer for the gracelessness of the documents — good grief, the fellow was so squeamish he'd rather starve to death than eat a vegetable "tainted" by a meaty spoon, rather lie awake than sleep on a bed "tainted" by the momentary proximity of a workman's bum — Theroux faxed each of them, and posted them through the mail in case of interception, that Naipaul might countenance the evidence of his error of judgment. Knowing also, of course, that Naipaul was never a man to stand corrected.

The inflex are wrong, though. This is not and never was a literary feud.

Paperback fiction

Lasley McDowell

In the City by the Sea, by Kamila Shamsie (Granta, £9.99)

THE first novel by 25-year-old Shamsie, this is a colourful and peripatetic view of politics in Pakistan seen through the eyes of 11-year-old Hasan. Barred from adult discussion by balustrades and half-shut doors, he sits outside when everyone thinks he has gone to sleep, to discover half-truths and bits of stories. An interesting and promising novel.

First Frost: An Anthology of Winter Reading, edited by Charlotte Cole (Women's Press, £8)

SOME of these are more evocative of winter than others. From Margaret Atwood and Carol Shields, there are expertly woven little tales: mature journalist Marcia who wants more than life has given her, and a group of friends who performed under Madame Bessant's instruction. A L. Kennedy tells a tale of goblin families, Helen Dunmore of girls turned to ice. All in all, a pretty even selection, but what stood out most was Mary Flanagan's wonderful tale of reluctant bride Nora Winkie arriving at her wedding in a purple wedding dress.

Beyond the Glass, by Antonia White (Virago, £6.99)

STAR of Virago's Modern Classics in 1979, White has enjoyed an enduring popularity. Last in the Frost in May series, this delicate but powerful novel traces the descent of Clara Batchelor into madness and temporary institutionalisation in the notorious Bethlem Asylum. In many ways, this is the most impressive of the series, with its bewilderingly honest portrayal of the breakdown of a woman and an artist. Clara's story is partly drawn from White's own collapse, her relationship with Catholicism and the influence of her adored but repressive father.

Crossing the Border: Tales of Erotic Ambiguity, edited by Lisa Tuttle (Indigo, £7.99)

THIS collection of stories of "rebels against gender assignment" includes writers as diverse as Angela Carter, Ruth Rendell, Poppy Z. Brite and Joyce Carol Oates. Focusing on the fear and the attraction of the "other", it takes in transvestism, Internet lust and androgynous wood girls in a variety of "weird" and "wild". This gree that unsettles but also carries the erotic charge of the unknown. A fascinating and vibrant collection of new and already published work.

Woman with Three Aeroplanes, by Lillian Faschingher (Review, £6.99)

IF you like your fiction cool and sparse with an air of danger, this is for you: a collection of short stories by Austrian writer Faschingher about the need to leave and the inability to do so — "leaving" cities, leaving people, leaving memories. There is a calmness about her stories which is occasionally punctuated by the threat of "possible violence", sometimes followed through, and conveys the frustration felt by those unable to make changes in their lives.

Mary Shelley's lost child

Ian Thomson

Maurice, or The Fisher's Cot
by Mary Shelley
Viking 154pp £9.99

THE cicadas make it Mediterranean, but this could easily be a drowsy churchyard in the English counties. The poet Shelley yearned "to be buried in so sweet a place". Violets still bloom wild on the graves there, and the dying Keats felt they were already growing over him. The Protestant cemetery in Rome is no ordinary boneyard.

In summer there's a pungent scent of dried blood from the abattoir nearby, and Gypsy kids squabble in the dust. Appropriately, the goddess Shelley lies buried here next to Antonio Gramsci, the atheist theoretician of Italian Marxism.

Six years before his Roman burial in 1822, Shelley had settled briefly in Geneva with his wife and Lord Byron. That summer was a long, wild party. One night, a pair of glittering serpent eyes materialised in Mary's breasts and Shelley ran off shrieking towards the lake. The 24-year-old had to be sedated with opium. A thunderstorm ensued and a savage scribble of lightning announced an unexpected guest. Mathew "Monk" Lewis, the chain-rattling Gothic novelist, unsettled the Shelleys with tales of the slave trade and zombification that he'd witnessed recently in the West Indies.

Mary Shelley, then only 20, conceived Frankenstein in the same Geneva villa. Her book is a cornerstone of British science fiction. In early 1997, the owners of a Tuscan villa unearthed a long-lost children's story by Mary Shelley, and would Claire Tomalin like to have a look? It was exactly 200 years after Mary's death, and quite a scoop. Maurice, Or The Fisher's Cot was written in the high tide of Romanticism, two years after the publication of Frankenstein and on the eve of Keats's death from tuberculosis. Mary, who had by now lost all three of her children, wrote it in mourning and as a meagre consolation. Very soon her

husband would be drowned in the turquoise of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

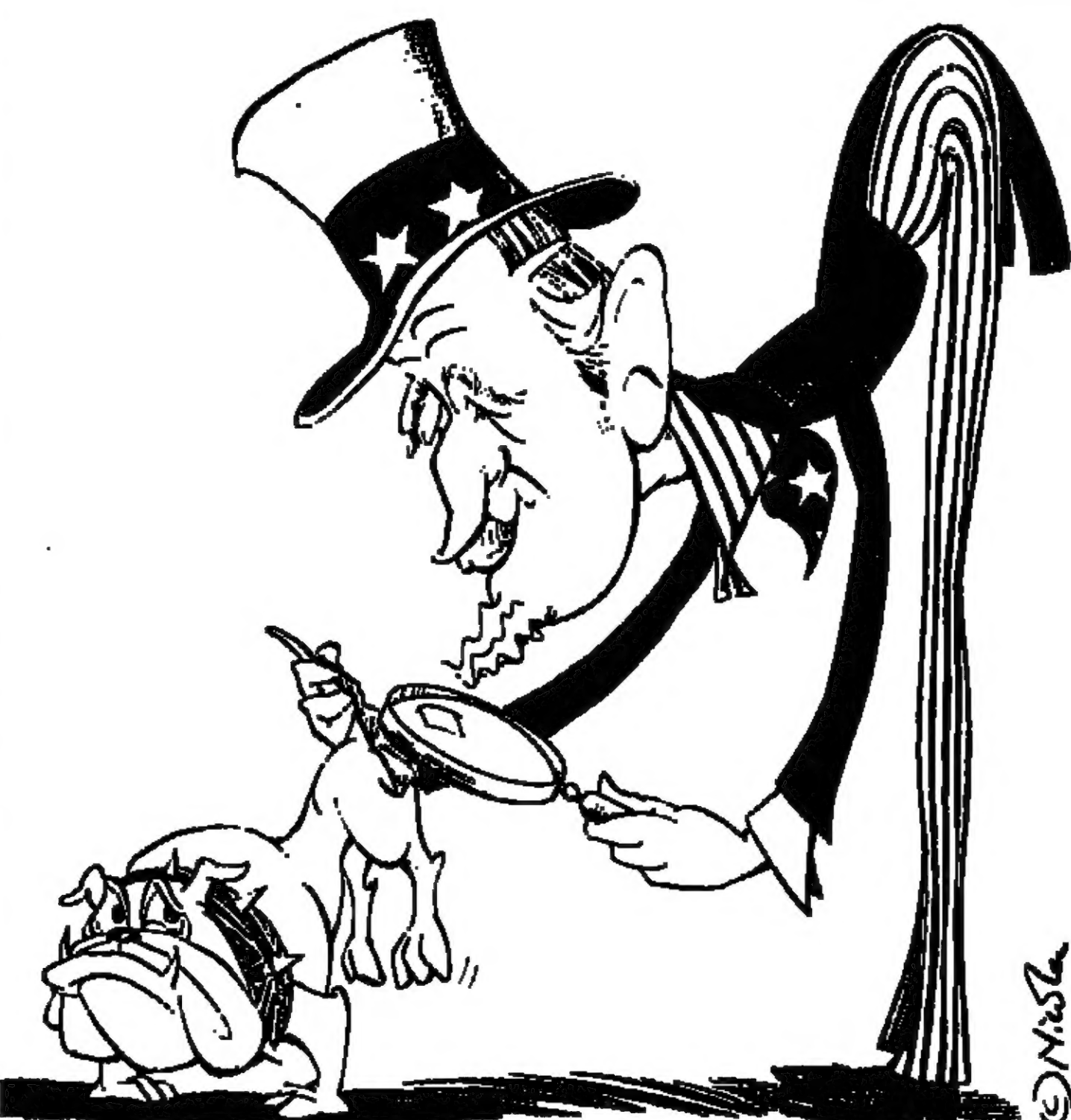
Unlike Frankenstein, however, Maurice has scant literary merit. Set on the Devon coast near Torquay, it's a thin fable about a boy's abduction from his family and his reunion 11 years later. The image of Maurice's shoes found in a field "about a mile from the river" was certainly more potent in an age when child-stealing was not so commonly reported. Yet there's little excitement or tension compared with the juvenile output of Robert Louis Stevenson, say, or Walter De La Mare.

Fortunately Claire Tomalin's long introduction is a transfixingly good read. It describes not only the docu-ment's discovery and likely genesis, but also Mary Shelley's madcap circle. In one of the strangest mysteries of the Shelley story, a baby girl was registered in the poet's name at a Naples orphanage in early 1819. Unaccountably, the infant was abandoned when the Shelleys moved up to Rome soon after.

The archives of the Santa Maria dell'Annunziata founding hospital did not reveal the girl's identity. Instead, a baptismal certificate was discovered in a church nearby. Elena Adelaide Shelley was probably the daughter of an English aristocrat who'd become besotted with Shelley and, unaware of his attachment to Mary, followed him to Naples, where she left Elena to the poet's care. Two years later, Shelley found that the girl had died.

According to Tomalin, Elena Adelaide was a model for Maurice, the lost child in Mary Shelley's story. This seems plausible. Mary wrote it for the 11-year-old daughter of her friend and fellow exile in Italy, Lady Mountcashell, herself in a broken marriage. Tomalin provides a zingy account of the document's scientific authentication and her thrill at touching the parchment presumed missing for two centuries.

The dog-eared pages, speckled brown with age, show where the quill had snagged on the vellum and caused the ink to spatter. A bibliophile's delight.



Seeing the Seitz

Nicholas Lezard

Over Here
by Raymond Seitz
Phoenix 372pp £7.99 pbk

THERE'S an old advertising story, in which Copywriter A wins a bet with Copywriter B about how he, A, could get B to read a page of close-set text. All he supplies is the headline: "This page is all about B." And this is why I found myself reading this indifferently written, pompous and distorted book right to the bitter end. Because it's all about us, the Brits.

Well, sort of. It's a view of the country as seen from the perspective of the US Ambassador to the Court of St James's, which means that his idea of reality in contemporary Britain is not the same as ours. (You don't see much with your head up, the Queen's bum.)

The first nasty moment is on page 6, in a little anecdote designed

to alert us to his wife's earthy good sense. A conductor turns up late for dinner, saying his Mozart rehearsal had over-run. "Ah, Mozart," I said with a sophisticated tilt of my head. "I think there are only two categories of composers: first, Mozart, and second, all the rest," at which point I heard a voice behind me say, "What about Marvin Gaye?" In other words: two banal opinions for the price of one.

But this is positively cute compared with what we get a few pages later. "The Americans had plans to develop a naval staging post and airstrip on a spit of sand named Diego Garcia... In the 1991 Gulf War, Diego Garcia finally proved its worth." I thought that Diego Garcia once had an indigenous population, which was booted off the island to make way for military knick-knacks. Does Seitz know nothing of this?

Still, the rest of the book is more or less straightforwardly unintentional comedy — apart from the

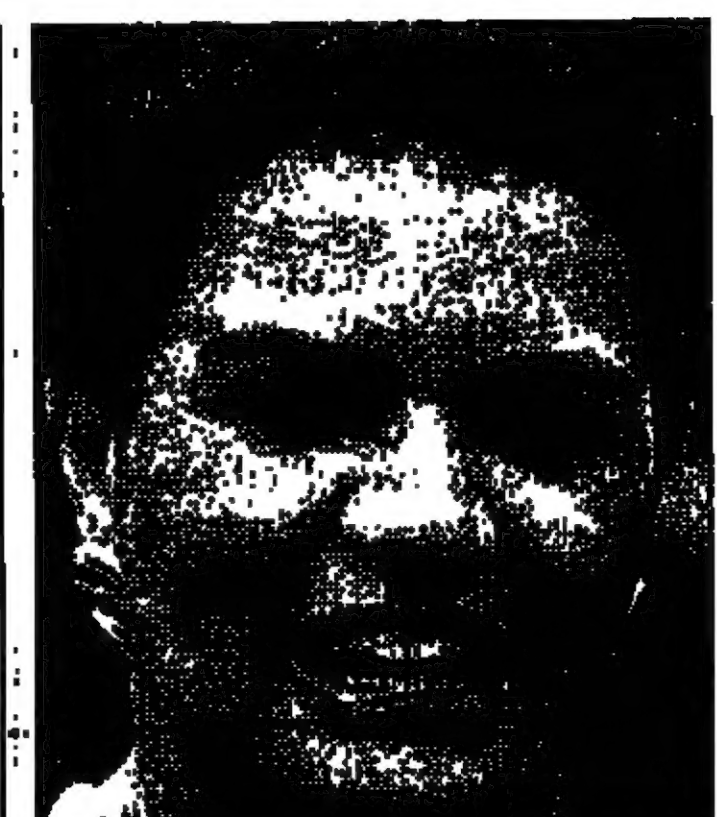
Scottish poet wins award with debut novel

Don Warriner

Cession the Guardian Fiction Prize has been won by a debut novelist, Jackie Kay was presented with the award and a £5,000 cheque for her novel, Trumpet, the story of a fictional Scottish jazz trumpeter, Joss Mooney, who on his death is revealed to be a woman.

Kay, an award-winning poet, was presented with the prize by lawyer and writer Anthony Julius at a ceremony at the Edinburgh City Hall last week. The prize, which last year was won by Canadian Anne Michaels for her debut novel, Fugitive Pieces, is Britain's longest-running award, established in 1965.

Stephen Moss, chairman of the judges, said: "For the way it marries ambition with understatement, for the strength of the writing, for its fascinating sub-



Jackie Kay: prize-winning debut

ject material; and for the way it engages with the great emotions without ever becoming sentimental, we decided to award the 1998 Guardian Fiction Prize to Jackie Kay's Trumpet." The novel, which was inspired

by a newspaper report about the death of a 74-year-old jazz woman, the novel, which was then received ecstatic reviews. "The voices in this tender, compassionate work were still ringing in my head a couple of weeks after I'd finished it," wrote Christina Patterson in the Observer.

Catherine Lockerbie said in the Scotsman: "Her language is tight, paced, tunnelling into the dark places of hurt and confusion." Kay, who was born in Edinburgh in 1967, is a Scottish mother and a Nigerian father, was adopted by a Glaswegian couple. Her first poetry collection, The Adoption Papers, published in 1991, won the Saltire and Forward prizes. Her second collection, Other Lovers, won the Somerset Maugham Prize. Last year she published Beside, a biography of blues singer Beanie Smith.

"I've always been interested in

people creating an identity, the fluidity of inventing themselves," Kay has said. "Women who dressed up as men captured my imagination — Malcolm De Zayas, Greta Garbo, Josephine Baker, your life like that: he was a self-made man."

Other writers on the short list were Derek Beaven, William Boyd, Alan Hollinghurst, Edward St Aubyn and Liz Jensen. Previous winners include Seamus Deane, Pat Barker, Pauline Melville, J G Ballard, Ronald Sukenick, David Berger and Clive Barry. This year's judges included critic Alex Clark, Lindsay Duguid of the Times Literary Supplement, novelist Tlhor Piacher, critic Maya Jaggi, Anthony Julius, writer and broadcaster Mark Lawson, and Brookside executive producer Phil Redmond.

Trumpet by Jackie Kay is published by Picador (£12.99)

Handwritten text in a box: "The end of the world"

